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Translating *Hamlet* into Hungarian Culture:
A Case Study in Rewriting and Translocation

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Summary of Thesis submitted for PhD degree

by Márta Minier

on

Translating *Hamlet* into Hungarian Culture:
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This thesis investigates the translation of *Hamlet* into Hungarian culture. In order to cover as wide a spectrum of translation as possible, the thesis employs Roman Jakobson's tripartite notion of translation: interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic transfer. However, the thesis also challenges Jakobson's categories, especially with regard to the considerable degree of overlap that occurs.

The first part of the thesis focuses on what is traditionally termed translation – translation 'proper' or interlingual translation. Nevertheless, in the context of the Hungarian *Hamlets* intralingual translation is also involved due to the central status of János Arany's 1867 translation. This translation influences the work of later translators, whether they approach the sacred text with the attitude of discipleship (that is to say, with reverence for Arany and with the intention of imitating or learning from Arany) or, less frequently, with the attitude of mastery (claiming equal or greater expertise). This process, which can be described as a Bloomian coming-to-terms with the father figure, is apparent when one looks at how famous Shakespearean-Aranyean fragments of *Hamlet* are 'retranslated' by subsequent translators. Apart from examples of the fragmentary afterlife of Arany's *Hamlet*, critical discourse also displays a certain taboo surrounding Arany's *Hamlet*.

The second part of the thesis deals with intersemiotic translation, providing a detailed case study of the 2003 Pécs performance based on a contemporary translation by Ádám Nádasdy. This instance of translation involves the transposition of a purely verbal text onto an art form that is not exclusively verbal.

The third part of the thesis engages in the discussion of a spectrum of rewrites (or, in Jakobson's term, 'rewording') and follows a genre-based division: Hamletian ramifications in drama, fiction and poetry.

The examination of these three interrelated areas of translation activity prompts the critic to envisage a complex Hungarian *Hamlet* palimpsest woven in the spirit of making Shakespeare and *Hamlet* 'our own'.

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INTRODUCTION

I

A reputed Hungarian director, Artúr Bárdos, visited England in 1949 in order to direct *Hamlet*. When asked by the BBC about this experience, he quipped,

Of course it is a great honour and a challenge, but to tell you the truth, it's strange to hear the text in English because *I am used to the original version, translated by János Arany*. (Elsom 1989, p. 94, my emphasis)

This anecdote was related by Anna Földes in *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?*, and it has since intrigued scholars and other cultural commentators. It was repeated in Zoltán Márkus's contribution to *La traduzione di Amleto nella cultura europea* (2002). It made yet another apparition in a collection of essays entitled *Foreign Shakespeare* (1993), edited by Dennis Kennedy, as an epigraph to Kennedy's "Introduction: Shakespeare Without His Language" (p. 1). It has also been cited in such non-academic sources as *The Guardian Review* as late as autumn 2003.

Both Justin Cartwright, the author of the article in *The Guardian*, and Zoltán Márkus, the Hungarian theatre scholar, point out the amusing potential of the remark, which is certainly partly how Bárdos intended us to take it; however, there is more to be said for this anecdote than that it illustrates "Shakespeare ha[ving] gone global" (Cartwright 2003, p. 7) or that it highlights "the contradiction between a universal Shakespeare tradition and its local and national appropriations" (Márkus 2002, p. 17). The story tells us about the place a text occupies in personal cultural memory, while this specific instance applies to collective memory, too. It may look curious at first glance, but it is an apt

expression of what Arany's *Hamlet* means to many Hungarians. This anecdote aptly and succinctly introduces the present thesis. It highlights the status of Arany's translation as an 'original', an apparently paradoxical view, but one the present study will place in cultural and theoretical context.

In short, this thesis will examine how Shakespeare's play *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* has been translated into Hungarian culture. However, almost every word in this statement (which provides the main title of the thesis) requires further clarification.

First and foremost, the thesis will not limit itself to the strict meaning of the word *translation* as in common usage, that is, interlingual translation. A broader metaphorical sense will be employed in order to engage in a kaleidoscopic survey of Hungarian reworkings of the play whether in literature (including both interlingual translations and adaptations in drama, fiction and poetry) or theatre (translating for the theatre, dramaturgy, and performance as translation), and indeed, on occasion, making some reference to film, classical music and rock opera. This critical approach is inspired by Roman Jakobson's tripartite definition of translation (1959), where he differentiates between *interlingual*, *intralingual* and *intersemiotic translation*. Jakobson introduced the term *intralingual translation* for rewording, *interlingual translation* for translation proper, and *intersemiotic translation* for transmission of verbal signs into a nonverbal system (1992, p. 145). The latter includes translation between media, for example, "from verbal art into music, dance, cinema, or painting" (1992, p. 151).¹ The emphasis in the main title is thus on Hungarian *culture* rather than on Hungarian literature or theatre exclusively.

¹ The use of the term *translation* in so wide a sense has not always been accepted by scholars. Luise von Flotow, for instance, takes issue with the term, because, in her view, "the material realities of translation are occluded in such metaphorical use" (1997, p. 95). However, in general Jakobson's terms have been enormously influential.

The three main parts of the thesis are based on Jakobson's three-fold definition. Yet, in a deconstructivist gesture, the thesis will continuously acknowledge that there is a great deal of overlap between these 'types', and that texts do not tend to fall neatly into a single category. The term 'text' is also intended to extend beyond verbal texts, such that any artefact that may be subject to scholarly scrutiny is included. The thesis intends to show that most texts that are supposed to be interlingual translations are, in fact, intralingual ones too, since they are in an intertextual relationship with 'the' canonical translation written in the same language (Arany's) and possibly with other Hungarian texts. The translation activity in these cases involves a (re)reading and further translation of Arany's work.

It is also difficult to decide how much and what kind of freedom a translator is allowed to exercise in order for the artefact to be called a translation, and not an adaptation, a version, and so on. There are no objective criteria for how to separate these notions. In Riitta Oittinen's view, "the main difference between translation and adaptation lies in our attitudes and points of view, not in any concrete difference between the two" (2000, p. 80). A great deal depends on what a certain receiving community regards as translation at a given historical time. Kazinczy's 1790 less-than-tragic *Hamlet* was viewed as a translation at the time, public opinion today would tend to consider such a work an adaptation, due to the radical innovations in terms of plot and character.

There is a plethora of terms when it comes to naming, or describing such 'translations'. Critics often struggle with a terminological crux. Chantal Zabus prepares a rich list of textual transformations without explaining them in detail, in order to offer the umbrella term 'rewriting' for them (which she defines with the

aid of another critical term: *appropriation*). The absence of translation from the nomenclature is telling:

As a genuine category of *textual transformation* that is different from but that possesses the ability to encompass sources, *imitation*, *parody*, *pastiche*, *satire*, *duplication*, *repetition* (both as debasement and challenging recurrence), *allusion*, *revision*, and *inversion*, “*rewriting*” is the *appropriation* of a text that it simultaneously authorizes and critiques for its own ideological uses. (2002, p. 3, my emphases)

There are numerous terms for modes of cultural re-creation, such as *alteration* (18th century), *imitation* (18th century), *spinoff* (contemporary), *tradaptation* (Lapage). Ruby Cohn (1976) opts for the term *offshoot*, with subcategories such as *reduction/emendation*, *adaptation*, and *transformation*. Other, often title-giving, terms in use are *repositioning* (Cartelli 1999), *reinventing* (Taylor 1990), *reimagining* (Marsden 1995,² Miller 2003), *making fit* (Clark 1997 cited Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 1) *cultural re-creation* (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 2). Fischlin and Fortier dismiss the term *appropriation* (for example, Marsden 1991, Desmet and Sawyer 1999) for connoting “a hostile takeover” (2000, p. 3). For the present writer this word does not have a negative connotation; it is rather *adaptation* that has an inferior tone. Adapting something implies adjusting it, making it suitable for a certain receiving community, even if that involves the possibility of changes that break away from the ‘source text’, while still being servile to it, communicating it to an audience in a more palatable or topical way (than the ‘source’ itself would read). Fischlin and Fortier choose adaptation as a “working label”, because this is the term they believe to be in most common use, and it also emphasises the process involved (2000, p. 3). (Interlingual translation is not included in this concept, though.) Importantly, they also point out that appropriation can take place without actual alteration of a text – for instance, quoting a Shakespearean sonnet on a Valentine’s card, or, in the

² The word is spelt as *re-imagining* in Marsden’s study.

Hungarian context, quoting a sentence from Shakespeare in a collection of aphorisms or in a young lady's commonplace book – while the cases they look at include textual modifications rather than 'mere' recontextualisation. It is to be regretted that the academic disciplines examining texts of a 'translational' modality are so compartmentalised, and thus, their critical attention so divided. Fischlin and Fortier are among the very few critics working on adaptation who draw a parallel between what could be styled 'adaptation studies' and translation theory.³

There are innumerable texts on the borderline of either inter- or intralingual and intersemiotic translation too. Suffice it to remind ourselves of theatre performances 'of' translations or adaptations or films that have a translation or adaptation as their main source. In these cases the intersemiotic translation depends on or is concomitant with inter- and/or intralingual transfer. Such instances are not necessarily centred on the verbal text. "With theatre translation, the problems of translating texts take on a new dimension of complexity, for the text is only one element in the totality of theatre discourse" (Bassnett 1991, p. 132). Part Two and, to a lesser extent, the Introduction to Part Three of this thesis will engage in a discussion of this phenomenon.

One interface between interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic translation is dramaturgy. One of the most significant aspects of the thesis will be to show that dramaturgy is indeed a kind of translation, whether it is the reworking of a translation or an 'original' work, as it reformulates that certain work for a new audience and for a new medium. Dramaturgy involves mainly intralingual and intersemiotic translation; or, more precisely, it is principally intralingual translation, though it has an intersemiotic aspect, as dramaturgy facilitates intersemiotic transfer. It may have an interlingual aspect as well,

³ The term 'adaptation studies' is used by John Joughin (2003, p. 145).

especially when it comes to a dramaturgical adjustment of what would be – in Jakobson’s term – a translation proper. In this case the dramaturg may doublecheck certain expressions in the foreign-language ‘original’ if the ‘original’ s/he is adapting to the stage is confusing. A section in Part One Chapter Two of this thesis, discussing István Eörsi’s first version of *Hamlet*, will focus on this, and there will be references to dramaturgy in Part Two, too, with regard to how Nádasdy’s translation was staged at Pécs.

This thesis will view translation as interpretation or – in a less controversial term – reading, as opposed to a replica or regurgitation of the ‘original’. It would be problematic, however, to view a translation as a direct and unambiguous asset of the translator’s reading of a certain ‘original’, yet the interpretative element is very important in translation, and the text reveals something about the translator’s approach to the ‘source’. Referring to Herder and Vossler, Riitta Oittinen points to translation as an act of reading.

Reading and translation are inseparable experiences on many levels. Reading as such is often understood as translation; reading is also an integral part of the translation process. Yet the translator is a very special kind of reader: she/he is sharing her/his reading experience with target-language readers. (Oittinen 2000, p. 17)

Some translators see translations as a form of reception. For the modernist poet István Vas, reading poetry implies translating from it (Kardos 1965, p. 66).

A literary or theatrical translation – especially if it is a retranslation – is stimulated and accompanied by critical, analytic work. The Yale deconstructionist Paul de Man compares the task of the translator to that of the critic (1986). (Re)translation can be indicative of a text becoming *writerly* in a culture (in the Barthesian sense). Roland Barthes appears to identify readerly texts (which the reader is not invited to rewrite) with the notion of the classic when he claims:

Opposite the writerly text, then, is its countervalue, its negative, reactive value; what can be read, but not written; the *readerly*. We call any readerly text a classic text. (1990, p. 4)

However, the very fact that reworking highly canonical texts is so characteristic of the postmodern hugely troubles Barthes' dichotomy of readerly and writerly texts. The heated debate in Hungary on the necessity of retranslating Shakespeare, which have been in the foreground from the beginning of the 1980s, indicates a reluctance to read Shakespeare (including Hungarian 'Shakespeares').

Viewing the translator-rewriter – and theatre-makers should also be included here – as a reader allows us to liken this process to how reception aesthetics and literary hermeneutics envisage the reading process in general: the reader identifies some gaps, some “unwritten aspects” (Iser 1988, p. 213) of the text s/he is reading, and engages in “filling in the gaps left by the text itself” (Iser 1988, p. 216). One may, thus, think of the translator-rewriter as an active reader of the foreign-language or same-language/native language ‘original(s)’, who will recognise certain gaps and – being inspired by the potential hidden in these missing elements – will fill them in imaginatively in his/her translation. Different translators are bound to notice different gaps. Nádasdy, for example, admitted that he found a gap with regard to the general perception of the character of Polonius:

I wanted to do justice to this gentleman, to show that he was not as stupid or as childish as many think. Actually, he's a benevolent person. Maybe he tells his daughter a bit too bluntly what he is inevitably supposed to tell her in some way: the prince cannot marry her. Ophelia is just one of Polonius's numerous duties. He does not embrace his daughter with tender loving care, but tells his opinion in telegraphese. Albeit in the wrong way, he does something which is right. (Minier 2002, p. 305)

This may be related to the practice of corrective translation, often exercised in feminist translation, for example that of the Bible or texts by misogynists (cf. von Flotow 1997, p. 27). Many other reworkings clarify aspects that are left ambiguous in the ‘original’, or exploit a possibility that is left there ‘in the bud’;

for example, the relationship between Ophelia and Laertes may be regarded as a bit suspicious, and it may provoke adaptation. The Pécs performance and, even more so, the Debrecen production based on Nádasdy's translation) make a very slight hint at incestuous desires between these two characters (in terms of body language rather than verbally). (Of course, the reading of this, again, is dependent on the viewer.) The script of the Lencsés-Horváth rock opera 'spells it out' in its transformation of the closet scene that Gertrude was not at all aware of old Hamlet's murder. The rewritten aspects can be connected to plot, character, and ideology, among others.

It is recognised within criticism that the act of rewriting in general has at least two important, and closely intertwined, components: a critical and a creative one (cf. Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 8). The former may involve assessing or even challenging the 'original'. Yet, this cannot work without re-creating, reimagining – often continuing or extending – certain aspects of the original. This thesis seeks to emphasise that interlingual translation is no exception. It also involves a balanced combination of creative and critical work. There is no clear dividing line between translation 'proper' and adaptation – both these metaphors try to capture the essence of rewriting. They are almost interchangeable: a translation adapts its 'original' in the sense of the Latin *adaptare*: 'make it fit', 'make it suitable' (as it is never an innocent, faithful replica), and an adaptation 'translates' its 'source' for a different receiving community (whether in terms of time or place).

The texts we shall examine do not lend themselves to pigeonholing in terms of temporality or state of 'completion' either. Neither the original or source, nor the translation is easily identifiable. Another aim of this thesis is to undermine the age-old dichotomy of original/source and translation, or – as translation

scholars tend to put it – source text and target text. These traditional terms need to be used in inverted commas, partly for mere reasons of philology (it is not always evident what source was used by the translator), and partly, in the interest of accepting and further developing an intertextual notion of translation (Józan 1997, Szegedy-Maszák 1998). With regard to reworkings other than translation proper, Christy Desmet operates with the term *parent text* in order to name the ‘source’ when she elaborates on Harold Bloom’s approach (1999, p. 9). Bloom himself employs the term *parent poem* in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973, p. 94). The term *parent text* is also used by Patsy Stoneman (1996, p. 88) in her investigation of sequels to nineteenth-century novels, mainly stories about women. In her article entitled “The Sequels Syndrome: Writing Beyond the Ending?” (1995) Stoneman deploys the term *originating text*. Ruby Cohn prefers the term *Shakespeare filiation* (1976, p. 378). In terms of gender politics all the three above expressions are politically correct; *parent text* and *filiation* seem to challenge the long-sustained masculine family metaphors of fatherhood and primogeniture in relation to Shakespeare, as *filiation* derives from the Latin *filius* [son] and *filia* [daughter].

The text traditionally labelled ‘original’ may be very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to trace back, or may indeed turn out to be a different edition or version in different cases of interlingual translation. The ‘Shakespearean’ original itself exists in three versions: the First (Bad) Quarto (1603), the Second (Good) Quarto (1604), and the Folio (1623); the most authentic one being the Good Quarto, according to the current state of Shakespeare criticism. These are just the substantive texts; nineteenth- and twentieth-century translators have had a wide selection of editions (with their own interpretative prefaces and critical apparatus) to choose from. Some of the

translations indicate which sources were used, but not all do so. This was not a widespread practice in the 19th century. Péter Vajda's case (1839) is rather problematic exactly for this reason: one can only make assumptions as to which edition(s) he may have used. Arany (1867) was using an English and German bilingual edition (Delius) as his main source. The practice of indicating the source is more common in the 20th century, though by no means always the case. For instance, Attila Szabó T.'s 1929 translation refers to the source, namely the Globe edition from 1887 (Macmillan); yet, somewhat surprisingly, Mészöly's 1996 text does not. Prompted in an interview (Minier 2003, p. 2, also see Appendix Seven) Mészöly said yes to whether he used the Arden edition, yet, this is open to doubt, due to certain verbal clues in his text. Árpád Zsigány's 1899 translation indicates on the verso that it is based on Dyce's second edition. In his well-researched afterword to his 1901 translation Béla Telekes mentions all three Shakespearean sources and, understandably at the time, he claims that all 'newer' editions were based on the Folio, which was generally the case until around the 1930s. Even though Telekes does not mention the source(s) he was using, it can be assumed that it was an edition of the 1623 text. It seems, though, that he used more than one source, as he points out differences between these in the endnotes. Eörsi and Nádasdy both used the New Arden *Hamlet*, edited by Harold Jenkins. However, this is only valid for Eörsi's second version (1988); as regards the first – more dramaturgical than interlingual – version (1983), it is not too clear which English texts were consulted. Jánosházy includes a translator's note at the end of his collected volume of Shakespeare translations, where he clarifies that he worked from the Oxford Shakespeare, using the extra lines of the Second Quarto (Shakespeare 2002, p. 465). Thus, the thesis does not aim to make a contribution to manuscript studies in the sense of carefully comparing alleged source and

translation line by line or section by section. Although the present writer has theoretical reservations about citing Hungarian versions of more or less the same English sentence, we shall do so (especially in Part One Chapter Three) partly for the sake of juxtaposing translations for illustrative purposes, partly to emphasise how indebted most translations are to Arany's work. The Shakespearean source to be used for this purpose is the New Arden Shakespeare, edited by Harold Jenkins, mainly because it is an amply annotated edition, and it was used by some of the contemporary translators. One has to bear in mind, however, that these translations are not based on the very same English source. Apart from the English 'source(s)', translators often consult foreign-language translations, which also contribute to the concept of the 'original'. For example, Arany consulted Schlegel's version, while Nádasdy consulted both Schlegel and one of Bonnefoy's translations alongside its German literal translation (cf. Minier 2002, p. 310).

It is not only the notion of the 'original' that can be deconstructed but the translation itself may not have a final version (perhaps, when the translator is still alive); there may be various versions by the same translator; some of them may be in theatrical use, some published for readers. This will especially apply to István Eörsi's and Ádám Nádasdy's work. One faces a philological problem here: which should count as 'the' translation by Eörsi or Nádasdy, if the question can be answered at all. This is a complex issue especially when all the translations were done for a different purpose or for a different audience, so they all have a 'right' to be called Eörsi's or Nádasdy's translations. Translating *Hamlet* can be a lifetime project, and the end-product may be very difficult to pin down. These Hungarian examples are not isolated cases in modern Europe. The French poet and translator Yves Bonnefoy has a lifelong history of translating *Hamlet*, 'bettering' his own translation, embracing new approaches (1957, 1959, 1962,

1978 and 1988). With his four different *Hamlet* performances (1960, twice in 1981, and 1989) Andrzej Wajda can be cited as an example from the stage. In the realm of film, Carmelo Bene prepared numerous versions of *Hamlet*.⁴

Péter Vajda's text has never been published; it only exists in manuscript, to be more precise, in three manuscripts. Two of these are believed to be dramaturgical versions of his text (it is most likely that they were done by the theatre-maker Gábor Egressy); while the third one is, in all probability, authentic, though it contains more than one handwriting (in different colours, including notes by the censor), providing alternative versions of lines, and other remarks to do with staging. It is still debated by Vajda scholars whether it should be seen as a holograph (at least as regards the main handwriting). This is a palimpsest in itself rather than a single unified text and it is very difficult to decide which version takes precedence.

Another phenomenon in current dramaturgy that challenges the concept of the integrity of the playtext is directors' and dramaturgs' practice of adding lines or even scenes to a particular translation. For instance, the distinguished writer László Márton rewrote the gravediggers' scene for the 2004 *Hamlet* performance directed by József Jámor, although they used Arany's translation as the basis of the script. Especially for the theatre the playtext is not a closed text; it is one that invites a creative touch. Textual additions for the sake of a particular production are part and parcel of dramaturgy, yet the activity may be almost indistinguishable from translation proper when a translator who is at the same time a theatre-maker inserts new material in his/her translation. This is close to the concept of 'creative translation' as defined by Jean-Michel Déprats, a contemporary French translator of Shakespeare (2004, p. 134). In 1995 János Csányi – using Arany's translation –

⁴ For Bonnefoy see Heylen 1993, pp. 92-93, for Wajda see Walaszek 1998, pp. 109-117, and for Bene see Cantoni 2003.

translated *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the performance he was directing at the Bárka [Ark] Theatre in Budapest. Csányi added an extra rehearsal scene to be spoken by the tradesmen. (The production was very well received and was awarded the prize of the magazine *Színház* for that year.)⁵

The aforementioned intertextual approach to translation encourages the receiver to question the dichotomy of 'translation' and 'original'. It is not only the so-called 'original' that is rewritten, but other texts and artefacts may be woven into the so-called 'translation'. These influences can come from the 'source', the receiving, or even totally extraneous cultures. Here is an illuminating example from the Hungarian translation history of another Shakespeare play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The expression in question is "my life for yours" (III/1; 40-41), which is spoken by one of the tradesmen, Bottom, instructing Quince at a rehearsal. In a recent Hungarian translation of the play this is mediated as "életemet és véretem ajánlom" [I offer my life and blood] (Shakespeare 1995, pp. 76-77). The translator's choice is playfully intertextual, since it recalls a famous anecdote from the history of Hungary under Austrian domination. When, before the Silesian war of 1756-63, the Empress Maria Theresa asked the Hungarian nobility for an army, they offered their lives and blood ("Vitam et sanguinem!"), provided that they received exemption from taxation for their lands. When retranslating the comedy Ádám Nádasdy makes use of the analogous situation in a daring, tongue-in-cheek way: both the tradesmen and the noblemen want to receive something in return. This event takes place well after Shakespeare's time, and it clearly belongs to the receiving culture. This very apparent rewriting gesture – in which cultural allusion is made to a much later event – does not allow the receiver to identify the translation with the original, and it highlights the creative aspect of translation.

⁵ For a brief assessment of the performance see Stefanova 2000, pp. 72-73.

For the above reasons it is difficult even to say – by way of introduction – how many proper translations *Hamlet* has in Hungarian. One may list Kazinczy (1790), Vajda (1839), Arany (1867), Zigány (1899), Telekes (1901), Szabó T. (1929), Eörsi (1983), Mészöly (1996), Eörsi (1993, revised 1999), Nádasdy (1999, revised 2001), Jánosházy (2002). Zsigmond Ács's translation is not extant (see Part One Chapter Two).⁶ Yet, Kazinczy's text was not based on an English 'original', Eörsi's first text is a dramaturgical version, Vajda's translation exists in various versions, and so on. Not counting any text that used a non-English source primarily (whether from a mediating foreign language or from Hungarian) one may identify nine 'proper' translations, but pigeonholing these is not at all the aim of this thesis. It is more important to point out their interaction, often through frequently cited or borrowed fragments.

The widely used traditional terms 'target language', 'target culture' and 'target text' are also problematic, since they imply that the process of textual production ends with the appearance of a translation, while it is evident that the translation will have its own afterlife. This thesis intends to work on the deconstruction of such terms, and will refrain from employing the word 'target' in such contexts. The term 'receiving culture' (adopted in accordance with hermeneutics and reception aesthetics) indicates more aptly that the translation is received by a different community to that which received the 'source text' (whether as a literary or theatrical experience), and it will obviously be subject to very different readings to those of the respective foreign-language 'source'. One of the markers of Arany's *Hamlet* being a text in its own right is that it has its own critical reception, examples of which will be referred to throughout the thesis.

⁶ An inventory called "Pest vármegye Játékszíni könyvtára" [The Theatrical Library of County Pest] lists a translation of *Hamlet* by a certain László Bartsai (cf. Bayer 1909, p. 159). This translation has never been found, and there are no other contemporary references to it.

Thus a huge textual network (the corpus around a specific rewrite of *Hamlet* with ‘all’ its reader-dependent intertexts) is continuously generated by the appearance of retranslations or rewritings. A retranslation is not only the revitalisation of the ‘original’. It is essentially a hypertextual reading, within a complex and diverse textual network in which originals and translations merge into one another.

Some light should be thrown on the phrase ‘Hungarian culture’. Firstly, why *culture* and why not *literature* or *polysystem*? The term *culture* implies much more than literature; it includes other art forms and a common lived history, a shared memory. Itamar Even-Zohar (1978) famously proposed the term ‘polysystem’ instead of ‘literature’ in order to include canonical as well as non-canonical ‘systems’. In a more recent version of his theory he took the ‘extraliterary’ into account to a greater extent. However, the thesis will opt for the more all-encompassing word *culture* and refer to different facets and areas of culture. This is partly because this term, albeit less rigorously defined, includes much more than literature, and partly because *polysystem* has a predominantly scientific connotation, that of attempting to categorise, pigeonhole and pin down living culture as though a cluster of systems.⁷ Even though the phrase *culture* will be used in the thesis rather than *polysystem*, there will be some references to the various insights of polysystem theory, especially with regard to the periodisation of translation history in a culture.

This thesis also makes a point of specifying Hungarian *culture* as opposed to Hungary as a country, since significant Hungarian-speaking groups live outside the borders of Hungary, and some of the translators to be discussed come from these communities. For example, Attila Szabó T. was a Transylvanian Hungarian,

⁷ The present author is indebted to Raymond Williams’s concept of *lived culture* (cf. Williams 1965, p. 66).

and his translation was published in Romania in 1929. The contemporary translator György Jánosházy also lives in a Transylvanian city, Marosvásárhely (Tîrgu-Mureş), where his translation of *Hamlet* was published in 2002. Csaba Kiss, the author of a recent rewriting, is also from Transylvania, though he now lives in the mother country. Even the centre of the Hungarian *Hamlet* canon – Arany – was born in what is now Romania (the Transylvanian Nagyszalonta). The poet Éva Finta is from the Ukraine, even though she has lived in Hungary since 1992. Excluding these important figures and many others on the basis of only historical happenstance would be unwise and illogical.

II

The present thesis is predicated on the notion that certain texts and textual networks – beyond their canonical positions as asserted by academia, publishers, artistic reworkings and other factors – acquire and maintain a role in the identity formation of a group or community, infiltrating the collective unconscious, and permeating collective and personal memory alike. Shakespeare's *primus inter pares* text, *Hamlet*, is one of the most fruitful examples of this phenomenon.

Though the status of these texts is difficult to determine, equivocal even, the concept that the present writer intends to circumscribe implies more than only books on the shelf of world classics or European/Western masterpieces, or texts on the lists of required readings in secondary, further and higher education. It also extends beyond widely read bestsellers or cult books. Apart from a potential to perform these functions such texts also contribute to the narration of the story of a community (such as a nation) or the *Bildung* of an individual. Long after the intertextual turn in the study of art it is not an unorthodox presupposition that a

text, a story, or rather, versions and versions of it, take part in the weaving of another story or stories outside their own original context.

In such cases it is hardly possible to decide whether it is the original text or any or all of its translated versions (or even other-language texts mediating between these two) that had such an important identity-providing role in the given receiving community. To put it more crudely, was it Shakespeare and his *Hamlet*, or Kazinczy, Vajda and – decisively – Arany that – to borrow András Kiséry’s apt wording – “Hamletised the spirit of the nation” (1996, p. 11)? Or was the process in fact determined by relay texts, namely German translations and adaptations, such as the Schlegel-Tieck or the Schroeder versions? Thinking of the Hungarian context, was it really Shakespeare who ‘made it’ or was it how the Hungarians reinvented him (partly under German influence)? The answer does not lie with one side only. It is the co-operation of all these constituents that have marked *Hamlet* as a naturalised Hungarian story (even if with some foreign elements).

There is no Hungarian Shakespeare in a Renaissance idiom, as Shakespeare had no Hungarian reception whatsoever – including translation – until the Enlightenment. This phenomenon is neither unique nor accidental. Several other Eastern and Central European cultures, and even Scandinavia, commenced their reception of Shakespeare only at this time (cf. Schultze 1993 and Smidt 1993).

It is a widespread practice within literary, and even more, in theatre translation, that the translator mediates the ‘source’ into the language of his/her own day rather than a language conforming to the historical version of the ‘original’. However, Jean-Michel Déprats presents the latter option as a possibility, or at least, a theoretically viable idea.

The desire to translate Shakespeare into language that corresponds to sixteenth-century English is a legitimate one. What can be more honest than not pulling the work out of its original linguistic and cultural environment, and keeping intact with the threads that bind it to its epoch and historical context? (2001, p. 78)

Nevertheless, one might argue that this strategy is only feasible if the translator lives at more or less the same time as the author. A consciously, deliberately archaizing language – be it prepared with a great deal of scholarship and diligence – might distract the reader or viewer, and might easily turn into a parody, namely of the style that it seeks to imitate or recreate. The decision of the great nineteenth-century Hungarian translators of Shakespeare to ‘render’ his work into the language of their own time, without a tendency to archaize, was a logical and pragmatic one. Since turning Shakespeare into the Hungarian of the Renaissance never occurred, to do so now would be nothing more than an experimentalist postmodern enterprise. It would result in a ‘translation’ more metatextual (speaking of its own conception) than functional as it will be obvious that the translation is written in a false, counterfeit sixteen/seventeenth-century idiom coined by the translator. André Lefevere, being aware of such experimental examples, interrogates the necessity of texts of this kind.

The flavor argument seems to lose its force the farther one goes back in time. Once the language variant becomes a historical variant, a previous stage of the same language, the flavor ceases to matter. Nobody would argue that Shakespeare should be translated into sixteenth-century German, for instance, or François Villon into fifteenth-century English, even though Dante has been translated into mock-thirteenth-century French and mock-thirteenth-century German. (1992, p. 70)

A different suggestion is put forward by André Lorant, who urges the emergence of a new prose translation of *Hamlet*. Unsurprisingly, his argument springs from the taboo position of Arany’s text: “Arany’s translation should be considered an untouchable master-piece” (Lorant 1996, p. 108). He continues:

No, this translation is worth its weight in *gold* and must not be touched! Yet the time has come to establish a new prose version in Hungarian that would take into account the immense progress made by Shakespeare specialists for a better understanding of the text, especially in the last half-century. (1996, p. 109, my emphasis)

Lorant uses a pun on Arany's name, which is the same word as 'gold' in Hungarian. This proposal (coming from outside Hungary, yet from a person of Hungarian origin) failed to find adherence, despite the example of the *Englisch-Deutsche Studienausgabe*. This represents a republication of Shakespeare in a bilingual edition consisting of an original and an intentionally very close prose translation.

An insight from polysystem theory may throw light on the importance of translation during the Hungarian Enlightenment. In Itamar Even-Zohar's view, translation can be of primary importance when a literature is young, that is, in the process of being established; when it is peripheral or weak; or when it goes through a crisis or is at a turning point (Even-Zohar 1978, p. 24). Once the culture has become settled, translation can be treated as a secondary activity. He claims that in strong, well-developed, 'self-sufficient' cultures (such as Anglo-American and French cultures) there is no urgent need for much translation activity any longer (Gentzler 1993, p. 118). Later, he modifies his concept of the role of translation to be 'variable' instead of the dichotomy of primary and secondary (Gentzler 1993, p. 117).

The appearance of Shakespeare 'translations' (or rather adaptations) during the Enlightenment was part of a process of national literature-making and language reform. There was a programmatic amelioration of the language taking place through translation, while at the same time, a chief aim of translating certain 'central' texts of European culture was to gain domestic as well as foreign prestige for the language. It is hardly surprising that a few texts by Shakespeare –

or rather, their Hungarian appropriations – became much more than just classics; they are rather ‘texts of identity’ (cf. Shotter and Gergen 1989). It is a case of many *Hamlets*, or rather, ‘Hamlet’ as a multi-layered and not easily decipherable palimpsest in Hungarian culture.

For Hungarians *Hamlet* has become a skeleton in the cupboard. Or – to put it in a more Hamletian way – it is a skeleton in the closet of the cultural history of the nation. The skeleton makes an apparition at likely as well as unexpected moments; it can turn up at any time and in any form, sometimes in disguise, other times without dissimulation. As Pierre Nora claims about memory, it is “capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened” (1996, p. 3). The *Hamlet*-skeleton appears in translations; revisions of the translations; other, more creative rewrites; allusions; and it lives in many fragments. Its fragmentary afterlife has much to do with the ‘sacred’ status of ‘the text’ as a whole in general consciousness. This afterlife is apparent in famous phrases that have become part of the Hungarian language, aphorisms, and soliloquies that are recited almost as poems. Even though there has been an unsaid, unofficial, yet quite far-reaching taboo around Arany’s canonical translation, ‘Hamlet’ – the skeleton – is fleshed out in a variety of ways, most of which are Aranyean in some way or another. The Hungarian translation of Shakespeare is closely interrelated with the cause of the Hungarian language, which is why in the historical survey of this process (Part One Chapter One) there will be special emphasis placed on the cultural and political status of the vernacular and its role in the formation of national identity.

‘Hamlet’ can also be seen as a *lieu de mémoire* in Hungarian culture. In Nora’s definition, “a *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has

become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (1996, p. XVII).

We shall adopt the term ‘translationese’ from linguistic translation theory (Klaudy 1997, p. 58) with a revised, more culture-related meaning to describe the style or register that is characteristic of many traditional Shakespeare translations and is expected from new ones. This deliberately archaic and literary version of language and the norm based on it dates back to the idiom canonised in the form it appeared in Arany’s translations and was reinforced by the work of other significant translators at that time and later on. Nevertheless, this is a purely hypothetical term; the Hungarian Shakespeare translationese can never be fully ‘detected’ in a particular translation, only in traces. It seems that translators (perhaps sometimes even unconsciously) feel obliged to (re)produce a version of this style in their translations, because this is the style in which Shakespeare’s plays became widely known and canonised in Hungarian, so this somehow sets the ‘right’, ‘authentic’ tone. For a late-twentieth century translator it seems impossible to disregard this and be completely independent. Not even Nádasdy manages this, whose credo is not to borrow, not to reiterate Arany (and, implicitly, the translationese associated with his translations). As examples from Nádasdy’s collected edition of Shakespeare translations intended primarily for the reader illustrate, he makes the play more literary, even with a slight tendency toward archaism.

The scope of the translation can be approached from a temporal and a spatial perspective. Firstly, with regard to the temporal aspect, Déprats discerns two attitudes when translating an author who lived in a previous age.

There are basically two tendencies or ways of translating older texts. Either the text can be anchored in antiquated language, or the old text can be rendered in the most contemporary language possible. One can accentuate the author’s time, or the reader’s/ listener’s time. This choice

calls for an analysis of the text's relationship with the past. The historic approach emphasizes what is over, what is unique and discontinued. The actualizing approach, on the contrary, emphasizes underlying affinities; it underlines things that are permanent, and describes History as the return of the past, in a different guise. (2001, p. 77)

However, the question here is further complicated by the fact that a canonised and well-known translation of *Hamlet*, namely Arany's, prevails in Hungarian culture.

The spatial aspect is best exemplified by reference to Lawrence Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignisation in translation (1995, pp. 17-27). This is concerned with how the foreign culture represented by the 'original' is handled in a particular translation. Within this paradigm, the main conflict for the translator is "between making the outcome of the translation process a visibly borrowed text, or rather a familiar sounding one which could have been originally conceived in the receiving language" (Minier 2002, p. 102). Friedrich Schleiermacher argued that

[E]ither the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader' (1992, p. 42).

According to Venuti, a domesticating translation adjusts 'the text' to the taste of the receiving community. This approach takes local expectations into account to a greater extent. Foreignising practices are supposed to retain the otherness experienced in the original. Wilhelm von Humboldt argues that the reader of a translation should be helped to feel the nature of the foreign, but not foreignness itself (1992, p. 58). (Out of the two tendencies Venuti promotes foreignisation as the politically correct one today.) However, one needs to be aware that foreignness cannot be retained, but only reconfigured. A translation will eventually be about how an individual culture and translator perceives and constructs within its own boundaries the foreignness of another culture, and hence

it will reveal a great deal about discourses which are contemporaneous in the receiving community.⁸ However, foreignisation and domestication can be seen as the two ends of a fluctuating process rather than two distinct and easily separable types of translation. It is not often that one can consider a translation either exclusively foreignising or domesticating. As Venuti himself later recognises, “the very function of translating is assimilation, the inscription of a foreign text with domestic intelligibilities and interests” (Venuti 1998, p. 11).

Nevertheless, spatial and temporal aspects cannot always be sharply divided. Terms from Arany’s canonical *Hamlet* that are so outdated that their meaning is unclear to most speakers are in one sense ‘mysterious’ remnants of an archaic idiom, while they can also be seen as foreign elements in the ‘original’ that need domesticating for the present world in a dramaturgical revision, for instance. Equally, translators struggling with the shadow of Arany’s text might want to use different words instead of these well-known ones, or vice versa, they might want to ‘retain’ these as though part of a matrix, since receivers might not recognise their text as *Hamlet* without them. This metaphoric usage – applicable to terms such as *bóbás*, *merő*, *vérnősző* – is inspired by the concept of the past as a foreign country (Lowenthal 1985). What we consider *other* in a historical moment may also be a creation of our own culture, which we no longer understand without difficulty. This is certainly one factor underlying the retranslation of classics. As Friedrich Schleiermacher asserts,

For the different tribal dialects of one nation and the different developments of the same language or dialect in different centuries are, in the strict sense of the word, different languages, which frequently require a complete translation. (1992, p. 36)

⁸ An amusing example of constructing the foreignness of a text is the Hungarian translation of *Hogwarts*, the name of the magicians’ school from J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. The Hungarian version is *Roxfort*, which, rhyming with *Oxford*, works as a joky pun, and in a way, is more characteristically British than the ‘original’ (cf. Minier 2004, p. 158).

The case is thus further complicated by the fact that some of Arany's language – the translation being more than a century 'old' now – comes across as unfamiliar to contemporary readers, so it is essentially material from one's own culture that is perceived as distant and hardly comprehensible, if not necessarily foreign in the strict sense. Part One Chapter Three of the thesis will elaborate on these examples and their afterlife.

Due to Arany's centrality, a great difficulty with regard to the Hungarian *Hamlets* seems to reside in issues of temporality and historicity. There are a few culturally specific, rather 'spatial', aspects of the text, such as a few phrases and concepts (Valentine's Day in Ophelia's song) that might be foreign elements (depending on when the translation occurred), but these are not at all overwhelming.

It is not only texts that can be approached from this point of view, but numerous other signifiers migrating across cultures. The fact that a text in the receiving language is offered with a title is a domesticating move in itself, since the title provides the translation with identity in that new culture. The way foreign names are treated in different historical times and in different types of discourse within a culture is often very informative. Within this thesis the English order of first name and surname will be retained even with Hungarian names, where the order is reversed. In a sense this is also a matter of translation. It is a form of domestication from the perspective of the English-speaking tradition, while it is an instance of respecting otherness from the present author's point of view.

Many of the allegedly interlingual translations and even the dramatic rewrites to be discussed or mentioned are case studies of joint or even multiple authorship for two reasons. Firstly, they are translations, so the 'credits' are shared between the author of the 'original' and the author of the translation.

Secondly, they are translations for the theatre or with a view to possible staging, so often other opinions (such as that of the director or dramaturg) are taken into account when preparing the printed text. It seems that *the name of the translator* (which is a powerful mechanism in Hungarian national literature) occupies, or rather gives life to the *name of the author*. Parenthetically, if one takes the literal sense of *name*, Shakespeare's name itself was variously 'Magyarised'⁹ – translated in a domesticating manner – in the period of initiation. Versions included *Shakespear*, *Sekszpír* (a transliteration of the naturalised pronunciation of 'Shakespeare'), yet the utmost example of domestication is *Lándzsarázó Vilmos* [Spear-shaking William].

Authorship in terms of theatre productions is a complex issue, since more than one contributor has a decisive role in it, but the main author (in the sense of 'maker') is generally not the author of the literary text on which the performance is based (unless s/he contributes significantly to the process of staging). The authorship of a performance – if the term is applicable at all – is shared between the director(s), the actors, the dramaturg, the set designer(s), the costume designer(s), the stage manager, the stagehands, the prompter(s), the composer/music supervisor, perhaps at times even the censor. It is debatable to what extent these are important in relation to one another. At least since Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*) (1921, revised 1924), it is a commonplace that all these jobs are indispensable and more creative than a 'lay' viewer might assume to be the case. One cannot objectively say the director is the author or *auteur* of a performance, or the most successful actors are the authors of a performance, although there was a shift from star-system to directorial theatre in modern theatre history. On the

⁹ This is not a singular phenomenon, cf. 'Magyarised' names, like Verne Gyula for Jules Verne, May Károly for Karl May; interestingly enough, examples like these appear with well-known figures from both popular and high culture.

other hand, it is very interesting how different productions are remembered, whether it is under the name of the director, the name of a leading actor, or both, or, in a less frequent case, under the name of another contributor, such as a set designer, or indeed, a translator or dramaturg. A case in point is the 1999 Debrecen production of *Hamlet*, which is attached to the translator Nádasdy's name by two distinguished Hungarian theatre critics: "A Csokonai Színház Hamletjének főszereplője Nádasdy Ádám" [The protagonist of the Csokonai Theatre's *Hamlet* is Ádám Nádasdy.] (Molnár Gál 1999, p. 10). In his review, Tamás Koltai does not even enter details about the performance itself:

A debreceni Csokonai Színházban nemrég bemutatott *Hamlet*nek egyetlen szereplőjével tudtam kontaktust teremteni, a fordító Nádasdy Ádámmal. [I could only relate to one character of the recently premièred *Hamlet* at the Debrecen Csokonai Theatre; and this was the translator, Ádám Nádasdy.] (Koltai 1999)

Thus, he restricts himself to a eulogy of the new translation in what is supposed to be a performance review. It is a crucial issue in theatre history how cultural memory stored different productions, and what constitutes the 'name' of the author in terms of theatre in various periods? With the advent of modernism the figure of the director has become much more central, productions are more visibly 'signed' by the director than ever before. Now, the importance of the actor is also reinstated. The problematics of authorship in the theatre underline that it is a complex medium, an art with a composite language, thus, very open to postmodernist theories which challenge authorship, such as those of Barthes (1975), Foucault (1988) or Rabkin (1985). The theatre is not exclusively (or sometimes at all) verbal; it is live, in a sense it is unrecordable and initerable art.

The first translocation of *Hamlet* is from 1790, and the most recent reworking to be extensively discussed is a performance premièred in December 2002. The time span is undoubtedly large; the main emphasis will, however, be on

how the translation of *Hamlet* developed after János Arany's 1867 translation, which was of foundational importance. This text can be seen as partially responsible for inspiring a number of intracultural rewrites and interlingual translations. As a result, this thesis will be primarily concerned with late-nineteenth and twentieth-century works, with a major emphasis on the latter. The overall focus will not be diachronic. Generic diversity will supersede chronology in terms of the selection of material; yet the historical context will be outlined, especially in cases where it is crucial to the understanding of the 'translation' (for instance, of Margit Gáspár's socialist *Hamlet* rewrite).

Although the investigation will not focus upon the figures of the translators, it needs pointing out that the various backgrounds the translators come from inevitably shape the translations. A number of them are poets: Arany (1817-1883), Telekes (1873-1960), Nádasdy (born 1947), Mészöly (born 1918), Eörsi (born 1931) and Jánosházy (born 1922). Interestingly, not very many of them are dramatists (Eörsi and Mészöly) or playwrights (Eörsi and – albeit marginally – Zigány).¹⁰ Kazinczy and Arany excelled as coordinators of the literary life of the nation. Some of them are scholars, namely linguists: Szabó T. (1906-1987) became an expert on the history and dialects of the Hungarian language after he completed his translation of *Hamlet* at the age of twenty-two, and Nádasdy is an academic working on English phonetics and language history. Zigány (1865-1936) was a teacher too. Most of them are practising translators.¹¹

¹⁰ Zigány wrote a play entitled *Shakespeare* under the penname Gábor Fábián, which was staged in the National Theatre.

¹¹ For instance, Zigány translated *Antony and Cleopatra* (1898), *Romeo and Juliet* (1898), *King Lear* (1899), *The Merchant of Venice* (1900) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1900) for Fővárosi Színház Műsora [The Programme of the Theatre in the Capital]. Telekes also translated *Romeo and Juliet* (1902). Jánosházy's Shakespeare translations include *Julius Caesar* (1996), *Coriolanus* (1998), *As You Like It* (1999), *Measure for Measure* (1999), *Macbeth* (1999), *Pericles* (1999), *King Lear* (2002), *Troilus and Cressida* (2002), *The Tempest* (2002), *A Winter's Tale* (2002); Eörsi translated *Coriolanus* (1985), *The Tempest* (1985), *Othello* (1988); and revised Arany's translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1980). Nádasdy's Shakespeare translations include *A*

A few notes on the practical aspect of the methodology are essential here. Approximate translations – sometimes more than one solution – of Hungarian passages (from primary as well as from secondary sources) will be inserted in square brackets in the text. It is common academic practice not to include English translations of foreign-language quotations, or, if included, they tend to be in footnotes, or vice versa, the original may be in a footnote. This thesis will do otherwise, for two reasons. Hungarian is not a language that is widely spoken or read in the academic community, and leaving the quotations untranslated would not facilitate the reader's task. Placing either the translations or their originals in footnotes would defeat the present author's intention of showing these extracts as foreign in relation to the main language of discussion; it needs stressing – and this is a methodological issue – that through its translation of Shakespeare we are examining a different culture. From the perspective of Venuti's theory this would count as a foreignising effect, while the alternatives mentioned earlier might have a domesticating or 'blending-in' effect. For a broad audience domestication is a feasible option; in academic discourse, however, access to the foreign is essential. Inserting Hungarian quotations in Hungarian and attaching the English translation in square brackets is part of a conscious agenda of foreignisation, drawing attention to the fact that the text quoted is Hungarian, and the approximate translation provided is only one possible translation. Therefore, all translations in square brackets are by the author of this thesis unless otherwise stated. Within the quotations, Hungarian spelling is not updated according to the most recent edition of the spelling dictionary issued by the Hungarian Academy. This is for the sake of philological correctness and from respect for the time when these texts were written. Italicising foreign terms, however, is an act of deference to the English

Midsummer Night's Dream (1994), *The Comedy of Errors* (1997), *The Taming of the Shrew* (2000) and *Romeo and Juliet* (2003).

tradition. The translations are awkward at times, because their closeness to the source is more important for the purpose of the current scholarly work than their fluent readability.

In the tables (Appendices) and when otherwise quoting *Hamlet* in English, the New Arden *Hamlet* will be used, for pragmatic reasons. This is, to some extent, an authoritarian decision, since it is clear that the translators did not use the very same ‘source’. Bracketed references to act, scene and line are also made to this edition. Sometimes the Hungarian translation will not only be followed by its English translation (traditionally called a backtranslation) but also, in brackets and inverted commas, by the possible – or rather, hypothetical – ‘original’ from Jenkins’s version. Also, texts written in languages other than English or Hungarian (for example, by Schleiermacher, Fischer-Lichte and Pavis) – in fact, even some works originally written in Hungarian such as Riedl 1906 and Lázár 1993 – will be quoted in their English translations. These, as all translations, are intertextual rewritings rather than equivalents of the ‘original’. Thus, it needs stressing at the outset that strictly speaking it is not Fischer-Lichte, Pavis, and so on that are quoted but their English translation (with all its potential losses and gains – the investigation of which is not a task of this thesis).

According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, every language views reality in a different way (O’ Grady 1993, pp. 242-244, p. 595). The nature of this observation is ‘reflected’ in the grammar as well as in the vocabulary of a language. For instance, Hungarian does not have the natural genders (thus there is only one personal pronoun in the third person), but it has the so-called ‘*t/v*’ rule, using *te* as a more informal address, and *maga* as a formal one.¹² This thesis emphasises that translation – here: a metaphor of various types of reworking – involves critical as well as creative work. The thesis also has a slight creative

¹² For a linguistic profile of Hungarian see Abondolo 1998.

aspect to it beside the obligatory scholarly one, since it attempts to translate not only in the literal sense – that is to say, ‘rendering’ passages from Hungarian into English – but also constantly mediating between two cultures and languages that carry very different ways of thinking. As T. S. Eliot notes, “Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind [...]” (1928, p. 47).

PART ONE: Interlingual Translation and Beyond

This part of the thesis will engage in an in-depth discussion of the phenomenon of a translation being central or sacred, and surrounded by a taboo. Having provided a chronologically based overview of the commencement of Shakespeare translation in Hungarian culture (Chapter One) and having placed these issues in a theoretical framework (Chapter Two), we will then look at various factors that maintain the sacredness of Arany's translation and contribute to this sense of taboo. These include academic canonisation alongside the publishing industry, the secondary school and university curricula, theatre (Chapter Two), and the fragmentary afterlife of the play (Chapter Three).

Chapter One: A Historical Survey of Early Hungarian Shakespeare Translation

“tied to the business of producing nation” (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 11)

Shakespeare's Hungarian acculturation started at a time when a modern Hungarian literature and national identity were in the process of being established; and Shakespeare was a major driving force in that process. The business of literature and language reform was organised and programmatic; the central figure of the movement, an ‘establishing father’, was Ferenc Kazinczy, the first Hungarian translator – or rather adaptor – of *Hamlet*.

However, as Péter Dávidházi emphasises, Shakespeare found renown even before he was ‘available’ either on the stage or on the page in Hungarian.¹³ He was first mentioned in Latin and French sources. György Alajos Szerdahely makes reference to him in his *Aesthetica* (1778) and in his *Poesis Dramatica* (1784). The very first occurrence is in a transcript of his lectures from 1776. Ferenc Bessenyei, an outstanding figure of the Hungarian Enlightenment, also refers to him in 1777 in a letter written in French (cf. Dávidházi 1989, p. 72). It was not only the allure of ‘Shakespeare’ (a shortcut for European values, liberty, democracy) that was of great significance at the time but so was the nation from whence he came. The English were also looked upon as a model, since they had well-established charities, they had achieved a high level of public education, and they appreciated their own intellectuals (including providing financial support for them).¹⁴

The Transylvanian scholar Elemér Jancsó (1966) distinguishes between four types of cultural mediators who contributed to establishing Shakespeare’s reputation and cult among Hungarians in Transylvania. An important group consisted of (mainly Protestant) peregrinating students and travellers who visited Holland, Switzerland, Germany and Britain, and had a chance to see Shakespeare performances. In the last three decades of the 18th century, a few of them mentioned Shakespeare in their diaries, memoirs or correspondence. The army intelligentsia constituted another group. This fragmented group served in the army in different cities of the Austro-

¹³ This is not a uniquely Hungarian phenomenon; in Japan, for instance – and this is an example chosen at random –, Shakespeare gained a reputation as a successful theatre manager, before the translations of his plays appeared (Sano 1999). It was the translation of Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help* (1859) that introduced Shakespeare and his *Hamlet* in Japan before the first extract was translated (1874). In Bulgaria Shakespeare was first mentioned in print in a weather forecast dating from 1858 (Shurbanov and Sokolova 2001, pp. 43-44).

¹⁴ The anonymous article discussing these issues, and pointing to England as “the very pinnacle of civilization” appeared in the periodical *Mindenek Gyűjtemény* [Miscellanea] (Dávidházi 1998, pp. 111-112).

Hungarian Empire, and thus encountered various other cultures. These army officers often attended theatrical performances; they came across Shakespeare too, and some of them, for instance, János Kótsi Patkó, the first Hungarian actor to assume the role of Hamlet, were inspired to engage in the establishment of Hungarian theatre. Enlightened members of the upper aristocracy also came across Shakespeare when travelling or studying in Britain, France, Switzerland or Germany. A prominent aristocrat who was on the fringes of the foundation of a permanent company in Kolozsvár was Miklós Wesselényi Senior. Some of his ideas owed a debt to Shakespeare, and he contributed to the formulation of the artistic policy of the Hungarian theatre in Kolozsvár. If not a Shakespeare cult, then at least an almost unconditional respect for Shakespeare and what his name represented started before the appearance of Hungarian versions of his texts.

Péter Dávidházi's seminal work, *"Isten másodszülöttje"* ["God's Second Born"], studies the history of Hungarian Shakespeare bardolatry in terms of a literary cult which works in the manner of a quasi-religion. Dávidházi (1989, pp. 73-76) distinguishes between five phases of the history of "this special code of social behaviour" (1989, p. 108): initiation (~1776-1840), mythicising (~1840-1864), institutionalisation (~1868-1923), iconoclasm (~1923-1960) and secularisation (~1948-).¹⁵ When he elaborates on Hungarian Shakespeare bardolatry in an article for the *Shakespeare Yearbook* (1996, pp. 1-9), and later on in his English-language study entitled *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare* (1998, pp. 108-110) Dávidházi gives less clear dividing lines between these periods: 1770s-1830s (initiation), early 1840s-1864 (mythicising), 1860s-early 1920s (institutionalisation), 1920s-1950s (iconoclasm),

¹⁵ The Hungarian names given by Dávidházi for these phases are 'beavatás', 'mitizálódás', 'intézményesülés', 'bálványrombolás', and 'szekularizálódás'.

1960s up to the present day (renamed as ‘secularization *and cultic revival*’). The more recent classification might imply that the periods are not so homogeneous, there can be dissenting voices in every period that challenge the dominant way of thinking; and the various attitudes characterising each of these stages can intermingle.

The Enlightenment: Shakespeare in Hungarian garb

As pointed out before, the main priority of the programme of the Hungarian Enlightenment was twofold: to establish a modern Hungarian literature (and drama) mainly by inspiring authors with foreign models; and to enrich the language, often via through-translation from other languages.¹⁶ As a result, the first phase of the translation history of Shakespeare in Hungarian was characterised by cultural adaptations of his plays. Striving for philological correctness and linguistic equivalence were not crucial factors in practice (although some translation criticism written at the time, for instance, Batsányi’s, demanded it). As Frigyes Riedl notes, “A hevenyészett fordítások és átdolgozások kora ez” [This is the time of hurried translations and adaptations] (Riedl 1916, p. 12). Therefore it comes as no surprise that the first Hungarian *Hamlet* – Kazinczy’s –, translated mainly in prose from a German ‘original’, avoids Shakespeare’s tragic ending, at least in the sense that the title character survives and ascends the throne. The source was Friedrich Ludwig Schroeder’s free adaptation, a version of which had also been directed by Goethe (cf. Flatter 1949, p. 191). Linguistic translation theory calls this method *pragmatic adaptation* (Klaudy 1997, p. 34). This strategy characterises the incipient stage of the

¹⁶ For the term through-translation (loan translation or *calque*) see Rozhin 2000, pp. 141-142.

Hungarian Shakespeare bardolatry, dominated by the German influence. Péter Dávidházi warns against dismissing these adaptations as inadequate translations, arguing that the role of translating Shakespeare at that time was different in Hungarian culture from what it is now, “[T]he ultimate function of translating was closely linked to the social function of the cult itself” (Dávidházi 1989, p. 131).

Kazinczy’s *Hamlet* was not the first Hungarian translation of Shakespeare. In 1785 the Transylvanian György Aranka translated a few scenes in prose from *Richard II*, using Christoph Martin Wieland’s adaptation as a quasi-original. The first acculturated *Romeo and Juliet* in Hungarian, based on a reworking of the play in the vein of sentimentalism and in a middle-class setting by Christian Felix Weisse, appeared in 1786.¹⁷ Gábor Döbrentei in his 1812 *Macbeth* (no longer extant) reduced the number of the characters (in proportion to the number of actors available). Although he consulted German sources, too, he worked from an English original. In 1830, he completed his second translation of the play, on which he worked for twenty years. In this text – which was put to use as a stageplay – he produced metrical patterns as a novelty in the Hungarian translations of Shakespeare. Döbrentei was planning to translate *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as well, but he did not manage to finish these. Kazinczy, too, translated *Macbeth*, relying on Gottfried August Bürger’s translation as a ‘source text’. Dávidházi’s summary of the ideology underlying translation this time recalls the basic principle of the French school of *les belles infidèles* of Nicolas Perrot d’Ablancourt, which influenced a few Hungarian authors of the day, for instance, József Péczeli (cf. Dávidházi 1998, p. 121).

¹⁷ Weisse sought a balance between French and English influence(s) in his work. For instance, in his *Richard III* he experimented with the three unitites (cf. Thorlby 1969, p. 824).

[I]ts ultimate mission was to spread Enlightenment and revive a national ethos, two values thought to be indispensable to survival. For such purposes [...] translations had to be beautiful rather than faithful. (Dávidházi 1998, pp. 131–132)

This was a period when the freedom exercised in rewriting was continuously informed by the constraints of creating an image of the nation and its culture for the sake of domestic as well as foreign prestige. Some Shakespeare plays were also adapted so that they promoted the integration of a mythical, prehistoric Hungarian past into the newly-formed modern European ideal. In such vein, *King Lear* is merged into the legendary figure of Szabolcs vezér (chieftain Szabolcs, who, according to King Béla's notary, was one of the leaders that took part in conquering the Carpathian Basin and settling the previously semi-nomadic Hungarians).¹⁸ This adaptation was done by Sándor Mérey (1779-1848), a politician and the manager of the Budapest theatre. He was a well-read person, who translated from French, German and Italian. Between 1831 and 1845 he adapted sixteen plays from German, including *King Lear* and *Richard III*.¹⁹ The latter, entitled *Tongor, vagy Komárom állapottya a VIII. században* [*Tongor, or the State of Komárom in the 8th Century*] is a rewrite of Weisse's German version. This play is also set in ancient Hungarian times. Even though both plays were staged at the time (*Szabolcs* in 1795, *Tongor* in 1794), they are both lost.²⁰

¹⁸ Szabolcs, which is a name of unknown origin, was revived by Vörösmarty during the romanticist national awakening (Ladó 1990, p. 212).

¹⁹ Such phenomena are not uniquely Hungarian, but rather characteristic of national awakenings in Europe. An interesting piece conceived in the same vein is also to be found in Finnish literature. In an 1834 adaptation of *Macbeth* (retitled as *Ruunulinna*) the names and the location (Eastern Karelia here) are entirely domesticated, and the plot is infused with the mythic Finnish past. The motives are very similar to the Hungarian ones, although the heyday of such adaptations in Hungarian was earlier. Paloposki and Oittinen see this "as an attempt not only at the improvement of the Finnish language or the enriching of Finnish literature, but at the creation of a history worthy of admiration on a national scale" (2000, p. 380).

²⁰ See Bayer 1909 Vol. I, pp. 273-274, Császár 1917, p. 43 and Kántor p. 82 for *Szabolcs vezér*; and Bayer 1909 Vol. II, pp. 45-47 for *Tongor*.

Although many literary and cultural historians of the time (for example, Bayer 1909, p. 136) claim that Hungarian writers saw the theatre as a means of getting their work – and thus, the renewed language – across to a wider public – which would imply a notion of theatre as subservient to literature at the time –, the role played by the theatre in both the introduction of Shakespeare to the general public and the spreading of ‘new’ (of course often ‘derivative’) Hungarian plays should not be underestimated. A pioneer in encouraging the foundation of Hungarian theatre was the first translator of *Hamlet*, Ferenc Kazinczy. So much so that he was planning to act in the first production of his translation (Riedl 1916, p. 39). He is a rather controversial figure in Hungarian cultural history. Frigyes Riedl termed him a person with the finest ‘anatomy’ for persiflage and the most enthusiastic ‘sponge’ (“a legfinomabb szervezetű utánérző, a leglelkesebb felszívó”, 1916, p. 5), while Czigány styled him “a dictator who preached diligent imitation” (1984, p. 120).

Kazinczy convincingly argued that in order to produce good domestic works authors should be stimulated by translations. The purpose was not only to introduce literary models and patterns but ideas as well, and improve the taste of the public. In Kazinczy’s view – or rather, in his practice from the 1790s onwards –, a good translation is a transplantation of the original into the receiving culture.²¹ He does not insist on either word-for-word or sense-for sense translation; he claims that the craft of translating involves speaking in the way the source text does, not necessarily reiterating what it says (“az a mesterség, hogy úgy, nem hogy azt”) (Radó 1883, p.

²¹ This did not affect his very early translation work, for instance, his ‘rendition’ of Gessner’s *Idylls* published in 1788.

482).²²

Yet, not everybody thought in similar terms. The emphasis on translation was not unanimously supported by Kazinczy's contemporaries (for example, the Debrecen school opposed it), but it managed to dominate this period of Hungarian culture. In József Kármán's view, the works translated should be sensitive to the Hungarian frame of mind; texts which were not in keeping with that should not be transplanted. He uses the fruit-metaphor to carry across his argument, from the perspective of the text:

Erőltetett minden gyümölcs, melyet messze világról nálunk ültetünk, és izetlen vagy szagtalan termése bünteti meg ragadozóját, ki anyai földjéből kitépve, azt idegen ég alá szorította!

[Every fruit that we plant here from far away is artificial; and its tasteless or odourless offspring will punish the raptor who tore it out of its mother soil and shoved it under a foreign sky!] (Radó 1883, p. 484)

Kármán's sentimental novel *Fanni hagyományai* [Fanni's Memoirs]²³ may have been inspired by Goethe's *Werther*. Although there is a strong intertextual link between the two works, Kármán's text is aesthetically so outstanding that it cannot be listed as a derivative text, as a *Wertheriad*. He seems to have illustrated his notion of learning from other literatures in his own creative work: being inspired rather than copying, or imitating in a servile manner.

Kazinczy's 1790 six-act *Hamlet* was the first publication in the series he entitled *Kazinczy Ferenc Külföldi Játzó Színje* [Ferenc Kazinczy's Foreign Stage]. It

²² Kazinczy's theory of translation was more rigorous than his actual practice. His practical take on translation is close to József Péczeli's theory, who gives the translator a great deal of freedom (cf. Radó 1883, p. 484). His own *Bácsmegyeynek öszve-szedett levelei* [The Collected Letters of Bácsmegyey], for instance, is a Magyarised version of one of the numerous German imitations of Goethe's *Werther* (namely Kayser's *Adolfs gesammelte Briefe* from 1777); and there are a few more examples of domestication in his *oeuvre*. Interestingly, he had two versions of this; according to a broad historical account of early Hungarian translation history, Antal Radó (1883), Kazinczy's 1789 version was closer to the 'original' in terms of plot.

²³ This *Ich-Roman* (I-novel) was posthumously published in 1843, but written in the late 1700s. The English translation of the title is borrowed from Riedl 1906, p. 167.

appeared in the same volume with *Stella* (after Goethe) and *Misz Szara Szampszom* (after Lessing). The text is a reworking of the Schroeder *Hamlet* with the Heufeldian ending. It featured a certain Oldenholm instead of Polonius, and a Gusztáv instead of Horatio. There were no counterparts to Reynaldo, Osric and Cornelius; and the duo of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was only represented by the latter:

Characters – even Hamlet – are provided with coherent and generally recognizable traits to the point of transforming them into representatives of types, and their actions are limited to those with consistent political and emotional motivations [...]. (Kiséry 1996, p. 18)

In the 1810s he started working on another translation of *Hamlet*, also from the German, but this time using Schlegel's translation as his 'source'. In a letter written in 1814 to Dessewffy he emphasised that he was working from Schlegel's very faithful translation (cf. Bayer 1909, p. 151). On this occasion he was translating the play in iambic metre. However, only the first act and a few scenes from the second were completed. Literary historians are still divided about this translation. Mária Szauder considers the second attempt an unsuccessful one in artistic terms (Kazinczy 1979, pp. 863-864). Frigyes Riedl claims that this was an improvement on his first translation, and a few of its lines reach the standard of Arany's translation (1916, p. 39). An example he gives is "De ím a reggel, biborában kelve Ama halom harmatján már ragyog" [But here morning – waking up in her purple – shines on the dew of that hill].²⁴ As Géza Képes (1969) notes, even in his first 'translation' Kazinczy often used 'literal' translation in a contrived spirit of authenticity. There is a striking, and to a certain extent, unresolvable, discrepancy between such a word-for-word understanding of fidelity on one hand, and passing off the Hungarian

²⁴ 'Radiant in her purple' would be a more poetic translation, but these approximate translations are meant to be literal. For other Hungarian translations of this passage see Appendix One item 18.

‘translation’ of a heavily adapted German version as ‘Shakespeare’s’ *Hamlet*, on the other.

It is needless to say that it was not only the Shakespearean *oeuvre* that was hugely transformed and appropriated but that of other authors too. Other texts translated at the time were the Greek and Roman classic, epics (by Tasso and Milton), *Ossian*, the Sturm und Drang authors (Goethe, Schiller) and Molière.²⁵ András Dugonics (1740–1818), the novelist, playwright and mathematician specialised almost exclusively in adaptations, in domesticating foreign works into Hungarian settings. For instance, his last adaptation is a translocation to Szeged of a comedy by Plautus (*Menekmus*, 1807).²⁶ The name of the author – as an institutional mechanism in a Foucauldian sense – also had a crucial role in this period. Shakespeare’s name was indeed a powerful one. There were some ‘fake Shakespeares’ in Hungary at the time, since his name was attached even to works without the slightest association to him, for the sake of gaining attention.²⁷ Curiously, Kotzebue’s name may have been even more influential in certain cases (for a less educated audience at least) as there is evidence that his name was given to a play originally derived from Shakespeare – again, for the sake of saleability (Riedl 1906, p. 150).²⁸

²⁵ A thoroughly domesticated version of Molière’s 1668 comedy *Le Miser* by Kristóf Simai entitled *Zsugori* [The Penny-pincher] relocated the action in the provincial town of Rév-Komárom.

²⁶ The play in question is *Menechmi*.

²⁷ These cases of playing with the author’s name are mentioned in Riedl 1906, p. 150.

²⁸ On the importance of saleability in translating for the theatre (in a Catalan context but with general implications) see Espasa 2000.

Towards a more authentic Shakespeare

In the so-called Reform Era (c. 1825-1848) Hungarian self-assertion assumed a more institutional and organised form, while Hungarian culture flourished.²⁹ The main concerns were similar to those of the movement of ‘neology’ during the Enlightenment: Hungarian language, literature, theatre. István Széchenyi saw the Hungarian economy as one cause of the reform. Among the achievements of the period were bridges on the Danube, horseracing, stockbreeding associations, the Iron Gates on the Lower Danube, and the regulation of the River Tisza. This would have been impossible without the involvement of the aristocracy, who played a greater role than during the Enlightenment. Waking up their ‘dormant national spirit’ was the far-sighted Count István Széchenyi.³⁰ At the Hungarian Diet of 1825 (convoked after a long hiatus since 1813) he offered the full annual income of his estates for the establishment of a Hungarian academy of sciences.³¹ Other aristocrats from the Upper Chamber of the Diet followed suit, and the Academy – first named Magyar Tudós Társaság [Hungarian Scientific Society] – started its work in 1830, with József Teleki as its first president. Széchenyi himself was a devotee of Shakespeare. The fact that he named his ship on which he cruised the Danube (and on which he was reading Döbrentei’s translation of *Macbeth*) ‘Desdemona’ is expressive of how deeply ingrained Shakespeare had become in Hungarian culture.³²

²⁹ The term ‘Reform Era’ or ‘era of reform’ (for the Hungarian term *reformkor*) is used in Lendvai 2003. On the period see Reich 1898, pp. 111-115, Lendvai 2003, pp. 191-205, Lázár 1993, pp.141-145.

³⁰ For a contextualisation of the term ‘dormant national spirit’ see Czigány 1984, p. 532.

³¹ The ruler Francis II did not convoke the Hungarian Parliament for thirteen years. “The stagnation of parliamentary life in Hungary from 1813 to 1825 was almost tantamount to the stagnation of all other intellectual energies of the nation” (Reich, p. 115). See also Lendvai 2003, p. 194.

³² About Széchenyi’s achievements also see Horváth 1965, pp. 381-384.

The Academy instigated research and translation of works of a scientific and literary nature, including Shakespeare. Even though the first collected Shakespeare only appeared under the aegis of the Kisfaludy Társaság [Kisfaludy Society] in the post-1849 period of political consolidation, it is important to note that the Academy issued a list of works by Shakespeare recommended for translation into Hungarian. In a circular letter issued following the assembly on 16 May 1831 the committee (consisting of Vörösmarty, Toldy, Bajza and Döbrentei, with Vörösmarty being the most influential member) recommended twenty-two plays of Shakespeare for translation (among seventy foreign plays altogether), not only for distribution to the members of the Hungarian Scientific Society (Vargha 1991, p. 20). It is curious that the plays now considered most canonical, such as *Othello*, *Coriolanus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, were missing from the list.³³ The Hungarian Academy offered financial assistance to the translators; for instance, Vajda's *Hamlet* was prepared with the financial support of the Academy (cf. Vörösmarty 1841 and Bayer 1909, p. 191). However, the single Shakespeare translation that was published by the Academy prior to 1839 was Antal Náray's translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was not used in the theatre. Meanwhile, there were stage translations that did circulate, though they were not 'authorised' by the Academy via publication.

The establishment of a Hungarian national library (1802), now bearing the name of its patron, was facilitated by István Széchenyi's father, Ferenc Széchényi. The national theatre was being set up in the spirit of Széchenyi's passionate rhetorical question, "Should a national theater forever be denied to a people who, so to speak,

³³ The list included *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *Henry IV Part 1-2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Part 1-3*, *Henry VIII*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Comedy of Errors*.

possess nothing outside their own language?” (1831 cited Lázár 1993, p. 142; translation slightly modified). A permanent theatre company in Pest started working in 1837 in its own building.

Of the many priorities of the Reform Era this thesis will focus on the cause of the Hungarian language, which is a key issue with regard to the importance of translating Shakespeare at this time. As noted earlier, the Hungarian language was in need of domestic as well as foreign prestige at this moment. Several German thinkers predicted the imminent fall of the Hungarian nation and, as a consequence, the Hungarian language. The most famous is the so-called Herderian prophesy from his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791):

Here they are now, the minority of inhabitants among Slavs, Germans, Vlachs and other peoples, and after centuries perhaps even their language will have disappeared. (1909 cited Lendvai 2003, p. 182)

Goethe and, more vehemently, the Austrian dramatist Grillparzer expressed similar views at various times, though in very different tones. In 1821 Goethe remarked about the Hungary of the day, “A country wonderfully rich in blessings. ’Tis a great pity it cannot progress” (Riedl 1906, p. 96). Franz Grillparzer’s opinion echoes the Herderian prophesy, emphasising, unlike Goethe, a lack of intellectual or artistic potential:

Hungarian has no future. Without links to any other European language and limited to a few million mainly uncultured people, it will never have a public, quite apart from the fact that the Hungarian nation has never shown any talent in science or art. (1840 cited Lendvai 2003, p. 200)³⁴

Among Hungarians there was tremendous concern about this. The poet János Kiss shared some of this fear, as in a letter to Kazinczy he commented: “However sad

³⁴ This was also recognised in retrospect by historians of the region: “Like the Czechs, the Hungarians were in danger of being swamped linguistically, spiritually, and they were fully aware and apprehensive of this” (Steinacker cited Lendvai 2003, p. 201).

it may be, I also prophesy the annihilation of my country” (Riedl 1906, p. 96).³⁵ Some of the Romantic poets – for example Vörösmarty in “Szózat” [Appeal]³⁶ (1836) – were greatly affected by the idea of *nemzethalál* [the extinction of the nation] (Czigány 1984 pp. 114-115 and 540). Despite this, Hungarian had become an official language in Hungary by 1844. Széchenyi’s credo was that “Nyelvében él a nemzet” [A nation lives through its language]³⁷ (Lendvai 2003, p. 199; translation slightly modified). It was in this context that the renewal of the Hungarian language continued well into this period, although with less vigour than under Kazinczy’s leadership. One man who was very preoccupied with this was the writer, translator and teacher who provided the first Hungarian translation of *Hamlet* that was based upon an English ‘original’. This is its principal merit in spite of the criticism it received in the two subsequent decades and even if, as Bayer suggests, Vajda consulted the Schlegel-Tieck version at certain points.

It was in this intermediary period (from the perspective of Shakespeare translation) that Péter Vajda (uncle of the prominent poet of the second part of the 19th century, János Vajda) completed his translation of *Hamlet* (1839). Vajda, who later also translated *Othello* (1842) and *Richard III* (1843) for the stage, started working on *Hamlet* in 1838. The *première* of his translation on 16 September 1839 was a benefit performance for Gábor Egressy. Between 1839 and 1866 it had forty-one performances in the National Theatre in Pest. It also gradually took the place of Kazinczy’s *Hamlet* in the repertoire in other parts of the country. In Kolozsvár it also

³⁵ On the other hand, according to an anecdote, the novelist András Dugonics laconically challenged Herder’s prophesy in a conversation with József Csehy as follows: “Don’t believe that stupid Herder, he lies!” (Riedl 1906, p. 97)

³⁶ “Szózat” is the second national anthem of the Hungarian state; an English translation by Watson Kirkconnell is available in Makkai 2000, pp. 260-262. For a discussion of the poem see Czigány (1984, p. 137).

³⁷ A more literal translation would be ‘*in its language*’.

had ten performances between 1853 and 1866. Hamlet's role in Vajda's translation served as a vehicle for generations of Hungarian actors, such as Gábor Egressy and Márton Lendvay, who played a crucial part in establishing Hungarian theatre. An aesthetically-minded and rigorous theatre criticism also came into existence as critics often viewed these performances with accentuated attention.³⁸ Outstanding theatre critics of the time included József Bajza and Ágost Greguss.

When the text was first staged, Egressy praised the translation, stating that in terms of fidelity it need not be ashamed of itself in the company of German translations. It is, of course, noteworthy and unsurprising that German translations are assumed to be the yardstick against which other translations must be compared. Neither is his opinion entirely impartial as he was acting the role of Hamlet in the *première*, and he collaborated with Vajda on various other translation projects. Two of the Vajda manuscripts – the more corrupt versions – seem to be Egressy's heavily reworked promptbook versions. In 1856, however, the text was severely criticised by Greguss: “Ha borsót hányunk is a falra, meg nem szűnünk új fordítást, vagy a réginek revisióját sürgetni” [Even if it is like counting the grains of sand in the desert we cannot but urge the need for a new translation or the revision of the old one] (Bayer 1909, p. 219).³⁹

His criticism is directed at specific phrases and sentences from the translation that he deems foreign-sounding and artificial. For instance, Polonius's words to Laertes – “Magas időd van.” [You have high time] – come across as a transparently literal translation (of a phrase starting with ‘it's high time’). Nevertheless, it should

³⁸ For instance, in Jókai's review of *Hamlet* with Lendvay in the title role (13 January 1848) the leading actor is criticised – albeit in a very covert way – for a histrionic style of acting (cf. Bayer 1909, pp. 204-206).

³⁹ The collocation used by Bajza ‘literally’ is ‘even if we throw peas on the wall’, meaning ‘an absolutely futile effort’.

not be condemned, for the language reform involved borrowing phrases from other languages in the form of a through-translation, and that implies borrowing or learning from the way of thinking prevalent in that language. However, this particular phrase was not uprooted and assumed into Hungarian. Other assailed places included “sikere a vérrel oly vitában van” [its success does not argue with blood] (the Ghost about the poison), and the King’s words to Hamlet: “Hajintsad földhöz ezt a bánatot, a haszontalant.” [Throw to the earth this sorrow, the useless one]. Both expressions are noticeably awkward. Hamlet’s quip about old men from his conversation with Polonius – “elmésségben bővelkednek” [they abound in wit] – reads as a mistranslation philologically speaking. Bajza found it contradictory to how he read this passage in the ‘original’: “bőséges fogatkozásuk van észben” [they have an ample lack of wits]. Laertes asks the King after he reads out Hamlet’s letter: “ismeri felséged a kezet” [does your highness know the hand]. Here the colloquial Hungarian would be *írás* [writing, handwriting] or perhaps *kézírás* [handwriting] (cf. Bayer 1909, p. 220).

It could be argued, however, that the main factor underlying the foreignate nature of Vajda’s translation, or certain phrases in it, is that he was not only coining new words but was also spreading and popularising words coined during the previous, main phase of the language reform.⁴⁰ Due to this, some of his writing was hardly comprehensible even to his contemporaries (Kutas 1999, p. 92). This is another case of finding a previous – even very recent – idiom virtually foreign, though written in one’s own language. Parenthetically, most of the words he made up and promoted did not integrate into the Hungarian language. Irrespective of this, his engagement in the

⁴⁰ Words coined by him include *bujdosó* (for ‘planet’), *emlény* (for ‘forget-me-not’), *hanga* (for ‘music’), and *zenér* (for ‘singing bird’) – neither of these took root in Hungarian.

renewal of the Hungarian lexicon impacted on his theatre translation (and probably contributed to its transience). As Bayer succinctly puts it, “Nyelve a kor színvonalán áll és irodalminak mondható” [Its language meets the standard of the age, and it can be called literary] (Bayer 1909, p. 191).⁴¹

Vörösmarty was also rather critical of the translation only a few years after its *première*. In his review of a performance of *Hamlet* with Egressy in the title role, he claims: “hűnek látszik; de egy kissé darabos és nehéz, mi színésznek felette nagy akadály” [it appears to be faithful, yet it is a bit clumsy and difficult, which is a very big obstacle for the actor] (Vörösmarty 1841, p. 191). He suggests that it is better than not having access to *Hamlet* in Hungarian at all, but stresses that more Hungarian writers should try and tackle this difficult work. Again, it needs pointing out – in Vajda’s defence – that the Hungarian language was in the process of accelerated change at the time of codification, and Vajda was at the forefront of the renewal of the vocabulary (especially, but not only, for natural sciences). Gyulai also asserted in 1863: “Vajda Péter Hamlet-fordításánál, mely elég művésztelen és magyartalan, nincs jobb” [There is at present no better than Péter Vajda’s translation of *Hamlet*, which is rather artless and not very good Hungarian] (Bayer 1909, p. 191). This implies a compromise to resort to this translation until a ‘better’ one appears on the scene; Arany’s work seems to have satisfied an urgent theatrical need.

Even though the heyday of blatant and almost systematic adaptation was almost over by the mid-nineteenth century, there were still a few examples, even amongst Shakespeare translations. As late as the 1830s, a few Shakespeare plays were still staged in versions translated, often heavily Magyarised from the German,

⁴¹ Bayer is not among those who dismiss the translation; nevertheless, he looks at it in retrospect, from a more tolerant perspective based on knowing Arany’s work.

such as *Ördögűző Fábián* [Fabian the Devil-chaser], an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Az egymást bosszantók* [Those Who Annoy Each Other], a rewrite of *Much Ado About Nothing* with German-named character.

The systematic, institutionalised translation of Shakespeare was urged in 1848 by the actor and translator Gábor Egressy, who was one of the most prominent actors to take on the role of Hamlet.⁴² The call for translations entitled “Indítvány a szellemhonosítás ügyében” [Proposal in the matter of the naturalisation of the genius⁴³] was published on 20 February 1848 in the periodical *Életképek*. This must have been done with Petőfi’s agreement, who was a close friend of Egressy. Petőfi, in a letter sent on 21 March 1848, already informed Arany of his translation of *Coriolanus* being in press, and told him that the translation would come out under the series heading “Shakspeare összes színművei, fordítják Arany, Petőfi és Vörösmarty” [The Complete of Shakspeare [sic!], translated by Arany, Petőfi and Vörösmarty] (Ruttkay in Arany 1961, p. 353).

Arany, however, mentioned in his correspondence to Petőfi that he had seen in a newspaper that Petőfi and Vörösmarty were about to translate Shakespeare’s *oeuvre* on their own. Vörösmarty and Petőfi are claimed to have divided all the plays between themselves (cf. Voinovich 1938, p. 77). Meanwhile, Arany himself was planning on translating Shakespeare’s entire dramatic *oeuvre* into Hungarian with his friend István Szilágyi. So was Lajos Kossuth, the leading figure of the revolution of 1848-1849. Emília Lemouton’s translatorial venture (1845), to be discussed in detail later, was also concerned with Shakespeare’s whole dramatic *oeuvre*. These examples,

⁴² His *sobriquet* is the ‘Hungarian Garrick’. On his importance in the establishment of the Hungarian ‘stage Shakespeare’ see Reuss 2002.

⁴³ More literally: ‘spirit’.

incomplete projects as they may be, suffice to prove that Shakespeare (no matter how authentic the texts were under this name) was an emblem of European culture, and thus, his translation was a challenging intellectual activity for Hungarians concerned with national revival. It is also clear, despite single-handed enterprises, that there were attempts at and a need for the ‘centralisation’ and coordination of the translation of Shakespeare, and the vision of it as a collective national undertaking. Lóránt Czigány asserts that in Eastern European literatures there exists a phenomenon of the national poet (the Hungarian phrase is *nemzeti költő*): “a major poet (e.g. Petőfi) who aspires to be an indisputable spokesman of ‘the people’” (1984, p. 540). It needs emphasising, however, that it is not only their aspiration but also their canonization – and often a widespread cult – that makes them into national poets. The phenomenon is to some extent constructed by literary professionals, and to some extent perhaps spontaneous, yet the ambitions of the respective poets cannot on their own account for this. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to look into how wide the applicability of this concept is in comparative literature; it certainly has, in the East-Central European cases, much to do with national self-assertion in the Romantic period, and this is exactly how it links to the nostrification of Shakespeare.⁴⁴ It is by no means a coincidence that it was the already celebrated national poets of Hungary who were encouraged by Egressy to translate for the collected edition of Shakespeare. The romantic triumvirate – as they have become canonised – consisted of Mihály Vörösmarty, Sándor Petőfi and János Arany. Of these Petőfi is ‘the’ quintessential

⁴⁴ See also the related concept of the ‘prophet-poet’ with relevance to Polish culture (Schultze 1993, p. 62).

Hungarian poet.⁴⁵ Their choice of text (that is to say those that they completed) is not irrelevant. As Frigyes Riedl notes,

Their choice was in each case characteristic. Vörösmarty, the poet of melancholy and grand passion, translated *King Lear*, Petőfi chose the proud, defiant *Coriolanus*, and Arany, the contemplative *Hamlet*. (1906, pp. 150-151)

The only work they managed to publish out of the planned series then was *Coriolanus*, translated by Petőfi. The story of *Coriolanus* perhaps appealed to Petőfi as a translator because of his disappointment at not being elected a member of the new Hungarian Parliament. The Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-1849 put an end to the project fostered by Egressy.

The great nineteenth-century enterprise: the collective edition

In the unhappy decade – called the Bach period – after the defeat of the revolution, the interest in translating Shakespeare did not die out, though it lost some of its stamina.⁴⁶ Vörösmarty was planning to translate six Shakespeare plays, out of which he completed only two: *Julius Caesar* (1840) and *King Lear* (1853). After Vörösmarty's death in 1855 the cause of Shakespeare translation was sustained by a circle of friends around Arany (Tomori, Szász, Ács). Szász in an open letter addressed to the editor of *Szépirodalmi Közlöny* urges the translation of the sonnets. At the same time, he implies that it is impossible to translate Shakespeare perfectly

⁴⁵ His status as a national poet is underlined by the fact that one of his epithets is 'the Hungarian Burns'. It is perhaps not accidental that the ground for comparison is a national poet from Scotland (where the assertion of national values was an issue at the time).

⁴⁶ The Bach period was a decade of totalitarianism in Hungary under Austrian rule, following the 1848-1849 war of independence.

(as his work is perfect).⁴⁷ The novelist, poet and critic Pál Gyulai wrote to Arany saying that the novelist Kemény and his circle counted on him in this matter: “Kérlek, járúlj ez üggyhöz nagy hatalmaddal te is; mindenki tudja és érzi mi függ tőled e nagy kérdésben” [Please bring your authority to this cause; everybody knows how much depends on you in this great matter] (Ruttkay in Arany 1961, p. 354). Having received an appeal from Tomori, Arany agreed to do some Shakespeare translation, and contemplated *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In passing, he mentions valuable ideas with regard to translation, which later became the norms of the official artistic policy of the translation enterprise. More or less unwittingly, Arany, at the time a busy secondary school teacher in Nagykőrös, found himself entangled with the slowly evolving enterprise: “Akarva, nem akarva, ő az egész terv központja” [Whether he wants it or not, he is the centre of the whole plan] (Voinovich 1938, p. 79).

The patron of the translation project was the bishop and teacher Anasztáz Tomori, a committed Hungarian of a Serbian origin – a so-called ‘Hungarian by choice’ – and Arany’s former work colleague from Nagykőrös, who gave away much of his unexpectedly inherited fortune in order to support cultural enterprises.⁴⁸ With Arany’s help Tomori began to manage the enterprise, which proceeded very slowly. The Delius edition that they chose to use as their main source was still in the process of being published, and the series started with the historical plays, the translation of

⁴⁷ Szász claims that Shakespeare is the most compact author in the most compact language, English: “a tömött nyelvű angolok legtömöttebb írója”. He concludes, “ha ama tökélyhez mindenestere ragaszkodni akarunk – akkor jobb előre lemondanunk Shakespeare fordításáról” [if we want to stick to that perfection by all means, it’s better to give up on Shakespeare translation even before starting] (1859, p. 373).

⁴⁸ The phrase ‘Hungarian by choice’ is used in Lendvai 2003 (p. 201), in connection with the literary historian Toldy, who also developed a Hungarian identity; a symbol of this is his change of surname from the German Schedel to Toldy.

which was not a priority in Hungary. Another reason was that most translators lived in the country rather than in the capital and keeping in touch was not easy (cf. Voinovich 1938, p. 80).

Following Szász's suggestion, in 1860 Tomori was ready to hand the organisation of the project over to the Kisfaludy Society. It was under the aegis of the Kisfaludy Society that the first Hungarian Shakespeare Committee was established in 1860. This body, consisting of János Arany, Károly Szász, the novelist Mór Jókai, the playwright Ede Szigligeti, the literary translator Móric Lukács and the critic and essayist Antal Csengery, took responsibility for various duties, including the coordination of reviewers. Tomori still continued to support the project financially, offering 200 pengő forints for each translation accepted. It is noteworthy that the publication of the collected works of Shakespeare was carried out under private patronage, albeit in an institutional framework. Little wonder that the enterprise came to fruition during what Dávidházi terms the phase of institutionalisation.

The first collected Shakespeare was printed between 1864 and 1878. It contained the plays in eighteen volumes (two plays in each), while the nineteenth volume comprised the translation of the sonnets, "The Rape of Lucrece" and "Venus and Adonis". Arany cleverly wanted the volumes to contain one of the more famous plays in order to pull in readers⁴⁹ and one of the lesser-known plays. This was a clever idea to make the less famous plays better-known and more widely read by the general public. It was also a wise publishing decision.

The project had a rather explicit translatorial *credo* with norms and strategies made apparent. The committee opted for verse translation, despite the fact that Ferenc

⁴⁹ Arany uses the adjective *kolomposabb* [bell-ringing].

Toldy, the ‘founding father’ of Hungarian literary history (at the time a representative of an increasingly unfashionable approach, represented by the Toldy-Vörösmarty-Bajza critical triumvirate), proposed the maintenance of Kazinczy’s ideals and the method of prose translation. Earlier on, in 1841, in an essay that used Náray’s version of *Romeo and Juliet* and Vajda’s *Othello* as examples, Dániel Gondol also took sides with the idea of prose translation. He stressed the need for faithfulness in terms of content, allowing for some fidelity in terms of form as well when poetry was involved. Bajza also approved of prose translation in 1842 with regard to Vajda’s *Othello* (cf. Bayer 1909, pp. 49-50).

The artistic criteria introduced for the institutionalised translation of Shakespeare were announced by Arany. These objectives were in the process of being crystallised for decades before the committee was established, since a great deal of private correspondence and accounts of informal gatherings are indicative of a process of negotiation concerning translation strategies amongst potential and actual translators. Arany stressed that verse should be translated as verse, preferably with the same number of lines. The translations should be true to the ideas, and the form of the original, yet they should be free (as opposed to servile). Footnoting should be kept to a minimum, that is to say, notes indispensable for the comprehension of the text. Having read an excerpt from one of Károly Szász’s translations, Arany emphasises the importance of readability in his report. In a letter to Tomori he stresses: “A fordító ne csak a színpadot, de az olvasó közönséget is szem előtt tartsa: tehát hatályosság mellett választékos és correct igyekezzék lenni” [The translator should not only take the stage into account but the reading public too: thus, apart from being influential, it should strive to be elaborate and precise, too] (Ruttkay in Arany 1961, p. 355). This

argument already comprises the premise that the translation is primarily prepared for the stage.

The call for translations advertised in different periodicals on behalf of the Kisfaludy Society, also advised on translation policy. In it Arany appears to differentiate between three types of public for the forthcoming translations: readers who, due to a lack of knowledge of English, resort to reading Shakespeare in translation; theatre-makers; and readers who compare the translation with the ‘original’. He emphasises, “A legfőbb cél mind a háromnak kielégítése, és erre törekedni kell, de teljesen elérni csaknem lehetetlen” [The chief aim is to satisfy all three, and one should strive for this, but it is almost impossible to achieve this fully] (1975, p. 895). He repeatedly stresses that the translation is primarily for the theatre as well as for readers who cannot access the original. Arany overtly marginalises the reader who compares the translation with the original text word by word. Thus, he wisely chooses to take lesser account of the most ‘artificial’ way of reading translations, the work of critics, or, in twenty-first century terms, that of translation scholars as well, who – *sit venia verbo* – read translations against the grain: against the primary aim and task of these texts (which is, in everyday practice, to stand for the ‘original’ in a different language). This is why, among others, such an enterprise (as the present thesis) of contextualising and closely reading different translations of a text is a metacritical venture. Arany also stresses a fidelity to the form and the material (anyag) or content (tartalom). His translation ‘theory’ – so to speak – seems to be a preliminary version of a formal and content-based equivalence championed by linguistic translation theory later. In this way his approach represents a finely balanced medium between a ‘source-text’-based and a ‘target-text’-based approach.

He confirms his antagonism to a 'castrated' Shakesperare (he uses the very word *kasztrált*), and he does not recommend omitting lewd or obscene passages, especially because in some cases almost entire plays (for instance, *Measure for Measure*) should be radically abridged if one used a strategy of purgation. Similarly, one cannot omit the first act of *King John* without ruining the play as a whole. A marked respect for the integrity of 'the text' comes across from these views. The metaphor suggests that a vital aspect of the Shakespearean text would be removed, an aspect that would facilitate impregnation, and further influence. They also examined the German process of Shakespeare translation. Generally no cutting was recommended, but there was a suggestion to attempt to avoid scandal where possible by toning the text down. Another question for the committee was whether or not to include what they thought of as Shakespeare's less accomplished plays such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Pericles*. Again, they decided that a complete edition should not exclude these.

The vexed subject of the 'moral censorship' of Shakespeare translation had been touched upon earlier, when Zsigmond Kemény, the great novelist of the latter half of the 19th century, paid a visit to Arany's home, and they discussed the matter of Shakespeare translation. Kemény was worried about the faithful presentation of certain expressions of Shakespeare's language in the salons; he hoped that there would be only approximately two hundred lines of Shakespeare that needed censoring in order to be accessible to the salon public.⁵⁰ However, Arany insisted on 'rendering' an unabridged Shakespeare rather than a 'purified' one. In his

⁵⁰ About this discussion see Voinovich 1939, pp. 81-82.

translational practice, nevertheless, Arany also noticed difficulties arising from a difference of taste between his day and Shakespeare's world.⁵¹

The *modus operandi* was as follows. As Arany's report to the Kisfaludy Society explains, they contemplated whether to commission the individual translations from known authors or to wait for submitted work. They eventually chose a mixture of the two approaches. One advantage of anticipating translations from anybody was that such a democratic process left room for new talent to emerge. They decided upon having specific reviewers for each translation, though the idea of permanent reviewers was also discussed and discarded. There were two reviewers appointed for each submission. The moral question arose: is it fair to scrutinise a commissioned translation? The possibility of the embarrassment of criticising someone who was approached to do this work was a problem to which they could not find a suitable solution. It appears from the call for contributors that Arany had three kinds of evaluation in mind: good, satisfactory, and poor.

The reviewers approached the matter in a thorough and rigorous manner. The literary historian Géza Voinovich stresses their impartiality:

Fordítók és bírálók egyaránt jó munkát végeztek. A bírálók sokat vissza is utasítottak. [...] Az ügyet nézték, nem személyeket.
[Both translators and reviewers did a good job. The reviewers turned down a couple of translations. It was the cause, not the people that they considered.]
(Voinovich 1938, pp. 83-84)

They rejected – for instance – the translations of *The Tempest* by Zalány and by Kornél Ábrányi, and two translations of *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado* (cf. Voinovich 1939, p. 83). They had István Fejes revise his translation of *Much Ado About Nothing*

⁵¹ In the second half of the 19th century several critics engaged in the discussion of individual translations and adaptations as well as translation norms (see Császár 1897, Csengeri 1894, Heinrich 1885, Márki 1866, Radó 1883, Radó 1908, Radó 1909, Rácz 1904, Salamon 1865, Sebestyén 1897, Szarvas 1898, Szász 1871 and Zichy 1881).

(the reviewers were Rákosi and Szigligeti). His translation of *Troilus and Cressida* was put under scrutiny by Bérczy and Lévy, who could not agree, so a third reviewer, Szász was involved. He eventually recommended the revised version of the text for publication.

Arany himself reviewed five translations: Zsigmond Ács's translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, Károly Szász's translations of *Richard II* and *Macbeth*, Ágost Greguss's translations of *Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens*. Two of these, the *Timon of Athens* and the *Macbeth* review are no longer extant. Arany was a very conscientious and thorough reviewer.⁵²

When, in 1924, the modernist poet Mihály Babits prepared his guidelines for a new Shakespeare translation project, he gave even stricter guidelines (outlined in eighteen points) than Arany did (Babits 1973, pp. 54-56). This level of institutionalisation and critical rigor may be connected to the high standard Arany's example set.

⁵² In 1862 he attached three hundred notes to Ács's work, in 1863 to Szász's work more than two hundred and to Greguss's two hundred and fifty (cf. Vargha 1991, p. 12).

Chapter Two: *Hamlet* as a Central Text in Hungarian Culture

“The main thing is, his eyes are open.”

(Barthelme 1975, p. 3)

The centrality or sacredness of texts of identity

Based on very different intellectual traditions, André Lefevere, Frank Kermode, Harold Bloom, Douglas Robinson, Péter Dávidházi, and, in a cursory remark, Susan Bassnett all seek to posit the sacred or central status that certain texts or textual networks acquire in Western culture, and they all mention, or even theorise, the notion with reference to the texts of Shakespeare. As emphasised in the Introduction, this conceptual field has a wider scope than institutionalised canonisation, though it may contain that element (especially in Bloom and in Dávidházi’s system).

In *Translating Literature*, a lesser-known item of his pragmatically theoretical output, André Lefevere focuses attention on the so-called central texts of a particular culture or cultural sphere:

Which texts does a culture consider central to its identity as a culture? Do they include only ideological texts (the King James version of the Bible, for instance), or literary texts (Shakespeare) as well? If the central texts embody the identity of a culture, what measures does that culture try to take to ensure that those texts survive and flourish? What implications do these activities have for potential translators? Are translators encouraged or discouraged? What if – as in Europe for roughly fifteen centuries – the central text of a culture is itself a translation? [...] How do various groups of different ideological persuasion translate the same central text? For what purpose? (1992, p. 143)

Lefevere does not theorise the *central text* as a term in a thoroughgoing way, since the work in which the notion is presented is a textbook-like publication serving as an introduction to the study of translation. Nevertheless, this study is meant to

inspire researchers too; the section on “Central Texts” appears in a chapter entitled “Topics for Classroom Teaching *and Research*” (1992, pp. 143-144, my emphasis). Lefevere’s concept is rather sketchy and insufficiently developed, therefore it stands in need of clarification, particularly for present purposes. In the quotation above Lefevere actually exemplifies the notion of the central text with the Bible and Shakespeare. Although these are not the only European specimens of this phenomenon, let us do likewise. The former is the religious sacred text of the West, the latter consists of the epitomous set of texts around which a secular, yet, in its workings, semi-religious cult is centred. (Péter Dávidházi, as we saw earlier, examines the Hungarian Shakespeare bardolatry as a quasi-religious cult.) However, unlike Lefevere, this thesis does not perceive such a sharp dividing line between ideological and literary texts; the literary merits of the Bible are recognised, and Shakespeare’s texts and their rewrites are associated with different ideologies.

Initially encouraged by different Protestant denominations, a number of European vernaculars (not excepting Hungarian) gained domestic as well as foreign prestige through ‘hosting’ translations of the Bible, and thus slightly approaching – although not hoping to reach – the significance of the three *linguae sacrae*: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. This is a phenomenon characteristic of the Renaissance, yet small wonder that from the Enlightenment on it was works from the Shakespearean *oeuvre* that typically played a leading role in – to borrow Benedict Anderson’s term – ‘imagining’ national communities and establishing modern national cultures.

This is a general tendency in Europe, although it is not exclusively Shakespeare’s texts (or their rewrites) that were put to such use. In the Czech cultural revival of the nineteenth century, for instance, it was the appropriation of

Milton's formidable epic, *Paradise Lost*, that played an important role. According to Vladimír Macura, the reason for this is the epic's indebtedness to different cultures: Jewish, Christian and pagan. Milton's work in Czech "had a symbolic function also as a means of stressing the universality of pan-Slavic origins" (Macura 1990 cited Bassnett 1993, p. 144).

Sherry Simon adamantly claims that "it is only in the Christian tradition that the translation can rival the original to the extent of itself achieving canonical status" (Simon 1996, p. 132). This opinion is voiced in a discussion of biblical translation, and specifically in comparison with the Jewish attitude to the Bible, where, as Simon notes, a translation can be explanatory but never a substitute for the original. As argued above, this phenomenon that the present author perceives as a continuous process in European culture is not at all confined to sacred texts in the strict sense of the term: a definitive text of a religion. Secular literature also has its own 'sacred' texts, with the aid of which a community's identity is renewed or established through interpretative translation.⁵³

Even though the term *central text* is somewhat fuzzy, it is evident that the translation of such texts provokes many debates, because they are retranslated again and again due to their close connection with the formation of national identity or the redefinition and revival of a sense of community. For example, a recent translation of *Beowulf* has been seen to have an identity-renewing role for the 'imagined' community of European poets. In a review of Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* Jan Čermák (a Czech translator of the epic) remarks:

[T]he fact that Heaney gave voice to *Beowulf* could equally be considered an act of loyalty – a thegnly tribute to one of the *foundation works* of poetry in English and to language seen as a mode of existence that, for poets and philologists alike, is of mythical importance because it gives us our origin. (2001, p. 106, my emphasis)

⁵³ André Lefevere's usage – *central text* – might have a slight overtone of the dichotomy of central versus marginal or peripheral; this aspect, however, will be sidestepped here, since this is not the governing perspective in this train of thought.

According to Čermák, the transnational community of poets needs a foundational text, and “the union of great poets [...] is embodied in Seamus Heaney’s *Beowulf*” (2001, p. 109). This is also a case of retranslating a text which is already of foundational importance. The foundational status of the originary text, *Beowulf*, is renewed by the retranslation of a highly canonised poet.

Lefevere is not the only thinker who juxtaposes the Bible and Shakespeare in the context of translation. The Calvinist bishop and literary translator Károly Szász, when giving his inauguration address at the Hungarian Academy in 1859, brings the issues of Bible translation and Shakespeare translation together, oddly enough jumping from the former topic to the latter, without providing any thematic linkage between the two. The title of his talk was “A műfordításról, különös tekintettel Shakespeare és a biblia fordítására” [On translation, with specific reference to the translation of Shakespeare and the Bible]. For Szász it was quite natural to couple biblical translation and Shakespeare translation together without indicating the nature of analogy between them, and to present a presumed kinship between these.

A similar usage can be found in Bassnett’s article entitled “An Introduction to the Semiotics of the Theatre”. In her understanding, “With traditionally ‘sacred’ texts, such as the plays of Shakespeare, the purity of the written text assumes an almost metaphysical value” (1981, p. 47). Again, there is not much elaboration on this in the article, since its main topic is related to performance, but it is clear from the context that Bassnett reflects on the ‘untouchable’ nature of such texts, the strange blockage against interfering or tampering with them.

Robinson's thoroughgoing study, *Translation and Taboo*, despite dealing with sacred texts in the strict sense of the term (that is sacred texts of a religion), also mentions that Shakespeare is similarly 'under our skin'. As he remarks:

[W]e could argue all day over just how foreign Shakespeare is, separated from us in time by four centuries and from me as a North American by an ocean but more under my skin than the latest novel by Dean Koontz, whose work I've never read. (1996, p. 45)

Lawrence Levine coins the term 'cultural deity' with similar meaning, which is a phrase more author- than text-related. The religious conception of the term should not be left unremarked. In Fischlin and Fortier's explanation, a cultural deity is a "privileged site [...] around which Western culture has struggled to authenticate and sustain itself" (2000, p. 8). Coinciding with this wording, Christy Desmet labels Shakespeare "an Anglo-American literary saint" on the basis of centuries of criticism (1999, p. 5). Roger Manvell also problematises the treatment of the Shakespearean text as a "holy writ" (1971, p. 1) in his analysis of Shakespearean films. However, he seems to assert that a task of the Shakespearean film director is to "bring out the values in Shakespeare's work through the medium they are using" (1971, p. 8).

Harold Bloom, too, cherishes the notion that the secular sacred texts of the Western canon have proved to be those of Shakespeare. "Shakespeare's works have been termed the secular Scripture, or more simply the fixed centre of the Western canon" (Bloom 1999, p. 3). He succinctly contends, "If any author has become a mortal God, it must be Shakespeare" (Bloom 1999, p. 3). Frank Kermode emphasises that there is a parallel between ecclesiastical constraints on Bible interpretation and the institutional control on Shakespeare criticism (1983, pp. 159-160).

Klaus Bartenschlager expresses a kindred view, while highlighting some of the areas of Shakespeare's influence on German culture. The main tenets of his statement seem pertinent to Hungarian culture.

[I]t must be enough only to hint at Shakespeare's place in the history of German literature and literary theory, his influence on drama from Lessing to Brecht, his presence on the German stage (year after year he is still the most frequently played author in the German-speaking countries), *his role in the history and theory of translation (comparable to the Bible itself)*, and last but not least at the tradition of German Shakespearean studies. (1988, pp. 326-327, my emphasis)

Here is a randomly selected Hungarian example of the rhetoric that compares Shakespeare's importance to that of the Bible. This rhetoric can be detected throughout the Hungarian reception of Shakespeare, although it is less characteristic of what Dávidházi terms the period of iconoclasm.

Like the Iliad and the Odyssey, the Greek tragedies or the Bible, these plays have grown over the years into impersonal creations that are treasured by all mankind. Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Richard III, Macbeth, King Lear, Caliban and Prospero live on in today's world as so many radiant models of human nature, of the human condition – like Ruth or Job, David, Daniel and Magdalen [...] (Keresztury 1963, p. 8)⁵⁴

A crucial aspect of the kind of texts in question, beyond contributing to the composition and strengthening of identity, is that there is a sense of taboo around these *texts of identity* (to borrow the title phrase of Shotter and Gergen 1989 study, severing the concept from its origins in social psychology). As certain widely known vernacular Bible translations (such as the King James version) take the place of the original in their respective receiving communities, so do some oft-played, oft-read and oft-cited Shakespeare translations. In these cases it is impossible to decide which has the central status: the notion of the work in the public mind, or the translation that they identify with the work. The translation is not stored in memory as the translation of a certain foreign text but as *the* foreign text itself, or the authentic version or replica of it in a certain receiving language.

⁵⁴ The 'original' for this can be read in Keresztury 1984 (p. 457).

Substituting for the ‘real thing’, being in the position of the ‘real thing’ means that further translations are superfluous, moreover, disturbing and confusing. New translations (those appearing after the widely known and canonical one) would baffle people, would make the identification of a translation with the ‘original’ complicated or even unfeasible. For which translation should be *the* one standing for the original when there is more than one translation of the ‘same’ text in a language, especially when one had already taken root or been ‘naturalised’? The phenomenon is also to do with thinking in binary pairs typical of Western culture: one more or less manages to deal with the dichotomy of original and translation – since we are used to binary pairs in Western culture – but not an original and a plethora of translations. Phenomena of in-betweenness – triads, quadriads, and so on – do not lend themselves to smooth categorisations, while a ‘mere’ binary pair – such as male-female, east-west, light-dark, spoken-written – with a traditionally dominating member and a dominated one is something to which the western mind is already extremely accustomed. It is more complicated to digest a set of texts that cannot be described simply within the ‘original and translation’ construction, but one of a number of competing translations within a vast intertextual network.

‘Educating’ the language

This zeal for translating a central or sacred text for the sake of the establishment or confirmation of national identity is strongly intertwined with the business of educating the language of a national community; elevating it to the level of the languages of culturally accomplished, respectable nations. As André Lefevere puts it,

[I]n the past translation has been used to ‘educate’ the target language until that language was judged to have reached the level of excellence achieved by the source language. (1992, p. 16)

He gives the following example:

Julius Nyerere [...] translated Shakespeare into Swahili not because such a translation was needed to convey information but because he wished to prove that Swahili could do all the things Shakespeare could do in English, that Swahili was a worthy instrument waiting for a genius to play it. (1992, p. 124)⁵⁵

Martin Esslin in his Introduction to Kott's *Shakespeare our Contemporary* observed this phenomenon with regard to Shakespeare translation well before this subject was broached by academic writing in the English language:

In many Eastern European countries ... the national literature, and therefore national consciousness itself, had crystallized around translations of Shakespeare. Only after a language had passed the test of being able to accommodate the form and content of the greatest drama (and Shakespeare is seen as that) could it lay claim, in the eyes of the people concerned, to be regarded as a vehicle for the highest flights of thought and poetic expression. (1974 cited Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 11)

The phenomenon, then, is not unique to Hungarian culture and it is not to be looked at as mere exoticism. Schlegel and Friedrich Gundolf argue that “German Shakespeare translations had transformed the native tongue and the range of national consciousness” (Steiner 1992, p. 401). George Steiner elucidates Gundolf's concept in slightly cryptic terms as follows: “The English text has not been translated into the German language [...], it has become that language” (Steiner 1992, p. 402). As Joughin summarises,

For German Romanticism, the semantic indeterminacy of Shakespeare is directly linked to the emergence of a new native ‘literary language’ which cannot be subsumed under existing rules [...]. (2003, p. 136)

The beginning of the Hungarian Shakespeare cult belonged to an age when it was artistic policy to uproot “foreign specimens rather rich in prestige” (dúsabb presztízű külföldi példák) (Kardos 1965, p. 66). Enriching the literature with works already important in other cultures and enriching the language with

⁵⁵ Julius K. Nyerere (1922-1999), educator and President of the United Republic of Tanzania, translated *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice* into Swahili (cf. Hoenselaars 2004, p. 18).

expressions, such as loan translations of foreign phrases (often from the ‘translated’ works), were activities closely interconnected. As Gábor Döbrentei noted at the time, one of the aims was “[...] a külföldi szólások módjai felvétele által nyelvünk hajlékonyabbá legyen és szabadabb festésüvé változzék” [that our language becomes more flexible and of freer pictorial power by taking on foreign structures of phrasing] (1828 cited Radó 1883, p. 485). At this time ethnocultural identity was becoming increasingly important. Previously, the concept of the Hungarian nation as a *rendi natio* was more dominant, which was based upon a sense of loyalty and service to the Hungarian crown.⁵⁶ The ethnocultural model, in which language plays a crucial role, is more inclusive (not only with relation to the aristocracy, for instance).

Interestingly, this period is similar to the English Renaissance in the sense that they are both times when neologistic tendencies were dominating. In the Hungarian context the Enlightenment was a period when status planning for the language was part of the general national awakening. The sociolinguist Peter Trudgill defines *status planning*, a major aspect of language planning, as decision-making about which varieties of language to use for what purpose within a nation or society, including the choice of a national or official language (2003, pp. 128-129). As it has been demonstrated in Part One Chapter One, these concerns and activities continued well into the Romantic period, when Hungarian became accepted as an official language. *Corpus planning* (Trudgill 2003, p. 29) or, in other terms, *language development*, the other main aspect of language planning – which consists in the codification of pronunciation structures, morphological forms, an expansion of vocabulary, and so on – also ran through these periods of Hungarian culture. Enriching the language and the literature, gaining a status for

⁵⁶ The term *rendi natio* is used by the historian Jenő Szűcs (cf. Debreczeni 2001, p. 52).

the language and for the literature were parallel issues, and Shakespeare was at the intersection of these processes.

Parallels between Bible translation and the translation of Shakespeare

Among the various ramifications of the correspondence between Bible translation and organised Shakespearean translation two issues stand out, which we shall explore here: institutionalised procedures and functional similarities in the respective receiving communities.

Firstly, in both situations, it is a committee – a group of professionals – that offers a modern authoritative translation (which is the case with Bible translations by established religious communities), or vouchsafes for the authority of that translation (as occurred with the first Hungarian Shakespeare Committee).

As Eugene Nida summarises about Bible translation,

Practically all Bible translating into major languages is done by teams of three to five people with complementary knowledge and skills and with responsibility for working full-time on translating. (Nida 2001, p. 28)

The case cannot be argued for all examples of Shakespeare translation as there are numerous individual enterprises. However, it is important that the first complete edition in Hungarian that actually materialised, after a number of failed plans and ambitions, was under the supervision of a professional body. The issue is more widely applicable to biblical translation, since it is very rare that an individual translator, working without considerable support from the ecclesiastical authorities, can provide a widely accepted translation of the Bible. Of course, a striking difference is that Bible translation tends to be a communal activity, while with the 1860-1878 Hungarian Shakespeare project it was more of a case of communal reviewing – usually resulting in the correction of the submitted translations – rather than communal translation. Nevertheless, even though the

translations were prepared by individuals, until the Hungarian Shakespeare Committee – a panel of translators, writers, and critics – gave its *nihil obstat*, the translation could only be regarded as a ‘work in progress’. The committee’s consent was based upon the professional reports of the appointed reviewers. As discussed earlier, two professionals were asked to write detailed reports, and to advise the committee with regard to whether the submitted translation was acceptable for publication. The case of Bible translation is similar:

Teams of translators normally divide responsibilities for different books of the Bible, carefully review the scholarly literature on these books, prepare tentative drafts that are then revised by other members of the team, discuss the draft translations together and decide on differences of interpretation and wording, and test the results with reviewers and representatives of the intended audience. (Nida 2001, p. 28)

Both Bible translation and the example in question of coordinated Shakespeare translation – translators and reviewers alike – tended to work according to strictly regulated principles. Obviously, this left some room for personal value judgements.

The situation to some extent seems to have anticipated the contemporary practice in distinguished publishing houses of two allegedly impartial readers reporting on submitted manuscripts. Although this can be seen as a nascent version of modern editorial codes, it is still different, because the process occurs under the auspices of a committee established for the specific purpose of serving the cause of Shakespeare’s highly revered texts whether with regard to translations or other intellectual artefacts. Furthermore, Arany envisaged an even more complex and systematic way of reviewing the translations with one person reading the Hungarian text, one using the ‘original’ text, and another employing, in the best of cases, a reliable German translation. This methodological proposition was not adapted in practice (cf. Voinovich 1939, p. 82). Arany also had in mind one translator from Pest and one from the countryside for each work

to be discussed, and even a reviewer from Pest who is not connected with the translation industry (cf. Voinovich 1939, p. 79). This did not become general practice, either.

The translators and the reviewers, like Bible translators, consulted a number of sources, mainly dictionaries and other translations of the given text into other languages. A major point of reference was a German source, the highly canonical Schlegel-Tieck translation. In a similar vein, modern Bible translators compare different language translations, especially if a *locus* is not clear in meaning.

Regarding the function of these two ‘sacred’ texts in the community, let us note that the translation of the Scriptures is not only an overwhelmingly communal and social activity, but it is also one embedded in the dynamics of contemporaneous power relations. Having a Bible of one’s own, that is to say, a Bible translation of one’s own, is a sign of belonging to a community. Sharing an identity-providing text, a ‘bible’, provides a sense of togetherness; it is part of the procedure of a community’s continuous redefinition of itself. Having a Shakespeare, that is to say, a Shakespeare translation of one’s own, had the potential of defining a nation not only for the nation itself but also for other nations. The very fact of having a Shakespeare translation defined a nation as a modern, developed and enlightened one. The verbal act of providing identity for a group has survived to the present day in variant forms. The process can be compared to different literary movements or trends drafting manifesto-like documents in order to raise consciousness and to facilitate a sense of belonging. Marinetti’s futurist manifesto is a good example. As Nora emphasises, organised social groups in contemporary society tend to search for their roots in order to

define or affirm their identities, and memory has a crucial role in this process (1996, p. 10).

Using the Bible as an identity-affirming text would suggest that an interest of a religious or denominational nature took precedence. Nevertheless, the broader factors of national identity are crucially important. Otherwise, why would there be a need for Scottish or American versions of the Bible?⁵⁷ Other subcultures, such as feminist religious circles, also require their own inclusive retranslated Bibles (cf. Simon 1996, pp. 110-133 and France 2000, pp. 162-168). Shakespeare's plays have also been revised, adapted, translated (metaphorically speaking) for a feminist audience. To sum up, there is a complicated interplay between religious and national identities as well as other social, political and artistic affiliations that informs both Bible and Shakespeare translation.

Such revisionary attempts often meet with difficulties, since the register of a canonical text frequently becomes sacred, untouchable, in fact, surrounded by an unofficial ban on retranslation. A counterpart to the term 'Bible English' could be Hungarian Shakespeare 'translationese'. Both terms refer to the prestige of the language of the canonical text. It is well known from the history of Bible translation as well as Shakespeare translation that the style of a highly regarded rendering frequently becomes the prescribed pattern for later attempts, if the original is 'allowed' to be retranslated at all. Although the ban is not necessarily licensed, it is maintained by some authorities and is alive in the national unconscious.

For instance, Antal Radó in 1908 points out that there are a few misunderstood *loci* in Arany's translations, and these could have been changed by a professional committee of poet-translators and experts on Shakespeare. It is

⁵⁷ A slightly similar case in point is the transcultural wandering of *Harry Potter*, a contemporary kiddult cult book that has appeared in Welsh translation, for instance.

noteworthy that a whole committee was required according to Radó to correct the mistakes in Arany's translations. The stress is on convening a committee as opposed to appointing or encouraging an individual to carry out the task. The underlying view here is that sacred words (the words of a 'sacred' translation of a 'sacred' author and text) demand an impartial committee as opposed to a subjective individual when it comes to 'replacing' even a single element of a translation. Even the term 'replacing' – merely used to describe such a way of thinking – implies the immanence of those 'sacred' words. The status of the author and that of translator are crucial here (and almost inseparable). There is no committee set up for the translation of Dickens or Thackeray, for instance.

The taboo around Arany's translation

This thesis would argue that the sacredness or centrality – including but going beyond canonicity – of the translations by some of the most prestigious nineteenth-century Hungarian poets – the triumvirate of Arany, Petőfi and Vörösmarty – and, more importantly, the entrenchment of Arany's *Hamlet* in collective memory impose a certain taboo on later Hungarian Shakespeare translation in general and the translation of specific plays (translated by these poet-translators in the 19th century) in particular. The term 'Ur translation' (ősfordítás) coined with reference to Arany's work by the Transylvanian poet and critic András Ferenc Kovács aptly demonstrates the reverence and pathos attached to these translation classics (1995, p. 33). Nevertheless, these translations do not contribute to the taboo to the same degree: for instance, Arany's *Hamlet* has had more impact than his translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This results in a (perhaps temporary) unofficial ban on retranslation (bolstered by different institutional and discursive practices). At the very least, it demands an

unavoidable metatextual explanation of the act of retranslation on behalf of the translators and the receivers of the translations whether professionals or non-specialists. Translators in the 20th century often wrote essays or theatre programme notes to accompany their translations (cf. Márton 1990, Nádasdy 1994, Petri 1995a and 1995b). These often contain justifications as to why their translation is necessary. Nádasdy is eminent at this.

The taboo around Arany's *Hamlet* is as old as the text itself. Indeed, it may be argued that it dates back even before the emergence of Arany's translation. Zsigmond Ács's translation of the play, which he completed in 1858 and handed in for consideration to the Kisfaludy Society in 1865 only to be rejected, is a case in point. Zsigmond Ács took offence, and in a letter of complaint addressed to Károly Szász he affirms Arany's status as an extraordinary creative talent working in the Hungarian language and specifically in translation. This was a concept in the process of construction already during Arany's lifetime. This represents a clear indication of the extent to which the taboo attached to Arany was already coming into being. Ács insists that his work should not be judged by the same yardstick as Arany is. He does not think of himself as a great name, an exceptional talent, and he does not find it fair to be measured by the standard of a genius. This shows the taboo attached to Arany in its conception. Let us also note the fact that Arany is an exception to the phenomenon of the translator's invisibility.⁵⁸ It may be an exaggeration to claim that great names – and great works by great names – were supposed to be translated only by other great names, yet Ács's polemic seems to revolve around this idea. He appreciates that great authors of a nation – such as the German Schiller – take part in Shakespeare translation. However, Ács rejects the idea that because of this no lesser poet

⁵⁸ Venuti (1995) introduced the notion with reference to the contemporary Anglo-American context, yet the scope of the term has been extended beyond this in Translation Studies discourse.

should have the courage to attempt a translation of the same prestigious foreign author. He also suggests that Arany's name was already too prestigious in the eye of the Hungarian nation for him to be actively involved in translation: he should be producing 'original' work of his own. This contains an underlying notion that translation is of minor value in comparison with 'original' creative work. However, the involvement of Arany and of many other translators who are often authors as well in their own right, proves that translation is a creative activity rather than a mechanical, repetitive one. Ács also emphasises his dissatisfaction: he thinks Arany's name was only used in order to belittle his name:

Ha ilyen magadforma emberek lenézve az én képzettségemet, kicsinyelve hírnélküli nevemet, csekélylettek engem egy Hamlet lefordítására, s nagyobb embernek szánták azt, miért nem nyilvánították, vagy a Kisfaludy-Társaság személyesen előttem? [...] Most kell-e temérdek gondba került munkámnak, melynél egyetlen egy sorra is előttem úttörő nem volt, megsemmisíttetni? S e miatt most kell-e *igénytelen nevem lenyomása végett egy Arany nagy nevének a másik mérőserpenyőbe vettetni*? Aranytól különben is eredeti munkát vár a haza; – s nem követelhetjük, hogy a világirodalom remekeit senki ne merje fordítani, hanem csupán a nemzet legnagyobb költője. A németek legkedvesebb költője is, Schiller fordított egy Shakespeare darabot (*Macbeth*): de azért a németek nem várták s nem követelték, hogy csak ő és ne más fordítsa Othellót vagy Hamletet: hanem neki mentek Shakespearenek Schlegel és Schlegelnél százszorta obscurusabb emberek és darabjait elég szépen lefordították.

[If people like yourself, looking down on my qualifications, not regarding my unknown name very highly, found me unsuitable for the translation of a *Hamlet*, and intended this project for a greater person, why didn't they or the Kisfaludy Society announce this personally to my face? Is it now that my work – that cost me no little pain and of which not a single line had a precursor – has to be destroyed? And is it now that because of the great name of an Arany is thrown into the other 'pan' of the scale for the sake of crushing my own plain name. Besides, the country⁵⁹ expects original work from Arany; and we cannot demand that nobody but the greatest poet of the nation dares translate the masterpieces of world literature. The dearest poet of the Germans, Schiller, also translated a play by Shakespeare (*Macbeth*), but the Germans did not expect and demand that only he and nobody else translated *Othello* or *Hamlet*, but Schlegel and people a hundred times more obscure than Schlegel jumped onto Shakespeare and translated his plays quite decently.] (cited Bayer 1909, pp. 226-227, my emphases)

⁵⁹ More literally; 'homeland'.

From the way Ács mentions *an* Arany, *a Hamlet* it is clear that he considers these as tradenames against which he does not feel it fair to be assessed. It is thus partly the status of the text to be translated, and partly the prestige of the other potential translator that constitute this instance of taboo.

The rhetoric about Shakespeare as a prodigy, a semi-divine phenomenon, a miracle, and so on, is reiterated in connection to Arany, though generally on a lesser scale. Some of the examples in fact emphasise that the two of them are in a sense on an equal level: not only is Arany's work as a translator equivalent in merit to Shakespeare's work as a playwright but he is as great a master of the Hungarian language as Shakespeare is a master of English.

Earlier, Ács had suggested to Arany that if anybody else was working on the translation of *Hamlet*, he would be prepared to pass over his draft provided his name would appear on the title page as co-translator ("egyik dolgozó társ"). He also expected to receive half the financial reward offered by Tomori. Arany told him that nobody had notified the Kisfaludy Society about an intention to translate *Hamlet*, and he told Szász to feel free to translate it. A reason why Szász, a meticulous translator and reviewer himself, was so strict with Ács's translation would have been that he was aware that Arany was working on his own *Hamlet* (Bayer 1909, p. 228). Of course, the prestige of the 'original' was a pressurising factor in itself: they wanted more than merely a decent translation of such a central play of the Shakespearean canon and indeed, European culture; it had to be a prominent translation.

Arany submitted his *Hamlet* to the Kisfaludy Society on 28 November 1866. The acceptance of this translation elevated Arany above the run of translators: "minden bírálat nélkül a Shakespeare-kiadásba fölvétetni határozta" [it has been decided to accept it without review] (Kisfaludy Társaság jegyzőkönyve,

p. 233, item 64 cited Bayer 1909, p. 229). His two other Shakespeare translations received the same treatment. This gesture is revelatory of his emerging status as an *arbiter* of literary taste. It is a sign of both instant canonisation, and of the sacred or central status of the text that ‘produced’ a taboo on further translation. Ton Hoenselaars remarks about Shakespeare translations such as the Schlegel-Tieck ones or François-Victor Hugo’s versions that their “status [...] has not hampered the production of new translations” (2004, p. 9). Nevertheless, he also notes that “few translators will ignore” the Schlegel-Tieck text (2004, p. 9). Within the Hungarian context one can certainly perceive a taboo which – even if it does not stop the emergence of ‘new’ translations – colours the new translation and its reception. Here is an example of the translator not feeling worthy of taking up the activity of translating *Hamlet* after Arany. When Antal Radó wanted to include *Hamlet* in his series of classics, he did not attain permission from the copyright-holder of Arany’s translation, Ráth Mór. He thus commissioned the promising poet Béla Telekes to translate it. Telekes was embarrassed and not very willing to attempt this after Arany. As he explained later in an interview, he only agreed because he had a large family to keep (Dalos 1977).

Attila Szabó T., a famous Transylvanian linguist of the Hungarian language, translated *Hamlet* in prose at the age of twenty-two, in the long and eventless summer and autumn of 1928 in order to kill the time (*időűző, időfelejtető*). Later he was ashamed of his translation. He omitted it from his *oeuvre*, almost disowning it (Kántor 1990, pp. 10-11). His family recalls him trying to request or even buy his volume of translations back from friends and acquaintances. This may be due to his dissatisfaction with this ‘juvenilia’, but it may also be seen as an occurrence of the taboo around Arany. In a brief introduction to his translation Szabó T. makes it clear that the inspiration came

from Arany; it was the beauty of his translation that drove him to translate the play anew. The Eörsi case study will examine some of the workings of the taboo in the late 20th century.

Attitudes of mastery and discipleship

Reading the translations and metatexts (such as essays and interviews) (co-) authored by contemporary retranslators of Shakespeare, the position of the Shakespeare translator, especially that of the translator of *Hamlet*, appears to be the position of the father figure, the position of alleged divine knowledge and power. As a result, being a Shakespeare translator is an honourable servitude, which, at the same time, involves a contest for authority. There is an Oedipal rivalry involved with holding this position, every retranslator struggles with the Father – the mechanisms of power ‘behind’ Arany, those upholding Arany’s status – to be able to utter – or rather, reiterate – the Hungarian voice of the second son of God (cf. the epithet ‘God’s second-born’ given by Emil Ábrányi). Harold Bloom’s model of the anxiety of influence – despite being set up mainly with regard to the history of Anglo-American poetry – seems to have application to the canon of Hungarian translations of Shakespeare. Bloom locates the emergence of such an anxiety in the Enlightenment (1973, p. 27). The Hungarian translation history of *Hamlet* can also be described as a contest between fathers and sons. In this context, though the appropriation of Shakespeare started during the Enlightenment, the contest has become more apparent after Arany’s translation of *Hamlet* became ingrained in cultural memory. As Bloom argues, “it may be that one strong poet’s work expiates for the work of the precursor” (1973, p. 141).

Nevertheless, in the Hungarian context the new challengers do not necessarily become ‘strong’ translators.

The typical attitudes adopted by translators with regard to the taboo discussed above may be described as attitudes of mastery and discipleship. The terms *rhetoric of mastery* and that of *discipleship* are borrowed from Nicholas Royle (1999), who refers to Paul de Man’s article entitled “Sign and Symbol in Hegel’s Aesthetics” (1982) as their source. The terms do not appear in de Man’s essay in this form, and Royle himself mentions them only in a footnote (pp. 307-308) without actually defining them, so the terms will be appropriated in this context to describe translators’ attitudes to the taboo connected to Arany. The rhetoric of discipleship may be taken to mean the verbal representation of an attitude that accepts the superiority of the father figure, and apologises for making alterations, however slight, on the strength of the fact that the spoken language itself has changed considerably. The rhetoric of mastery implies equal or greater competence than that of the father figure. The rhetoric of mastery and that of discipleship can mingle in a particular translator’s attitude, even in a single text by the same translator. In the explanatory metatexts written by recent translators to accompany their new translations, the rhetoric of discipleship is more frequent than that of mastery.

Using Kant’s interpretation of genius – “rule breaking but also rule making” –, as well as early critical work on Shakespeare from the late 1700s on, John Joughin argues that Shakespeare’s talent is perceived beyond academic learning and, at the same time, it sets an example for followers, it constitutes a rule in itself (Joughin 2003, p. 137). This implies a difference between creators (for instance, Shakespeare) and makers (for instance, Jonson). Joughin’s insights – despite being based on adaptation rather than translation proper – appear to be

relevant to the concept of the rhetoric of mastery and that of discipleship. The emerging translator or retranslator also tries to establish a voice of their own through learning from a master (creator), yet “the ungrounding of adaptation” (Joughin 2003, p. 139) seems to be essential for the new text in order to be name-making or epoch-making (cf. Joughin 2003, p. 144).

We see the birth of the rhetoric of discipleship as early as the time of Ács’s translation. For the sake of illustration of this attitude here is a passage from Dezső Mészöly’s essay in *Shakespeare-napló* [Shakespeare Diary] justifying his translation of *Hamlet*. The translator is directly addressing Arany in an imaginary monologue (along the lines of a soliloquy, though framed in apologetic and explanatory prose). The fictitious interlocutor, the Bard whose approval is expected, is Arany:

Mester, sokkal többet kaptam Nagyságodtól, mint azokat az átvett sorokat. Követendő módszert és szemléletet kaptam. Nagyságod művészi merészsége ébresztett rá, hogy drámatolmácsoláskor sosem szövegeket, mindig szerepeket kell fordítani. S egymástól elválaszthatatlan költői és emberi nagyságod tanított meg, hogy mindig éberen figyeljem, hol tör fel a drámában a líra. S hadd mondjam meg: úgy érzem, Nagyságod „börtön-Dániájában”, abban a sok „rekeszben”, „dutyiban”, s azokban az egymást figyelő és besúgó figurákban nem csak a Tudor-uralom: a Bach-korszak is ott kísért. S hadd teszem hozzá: Mester, megéltünk egyet-mást mi is! Nem csak krónikákból tanultuk meg, milyen egy emberéletekkel játszó rendőrállam. Van miből gazdálkodnia a sokat tapasztalt magyar írónak, ha Shakespeare-fordításba fog.

[Master, I have received much more from your Excellency than the lines I borrowed. I received a method and a way of thinking which I followed. Your artistic intrepidity made me aware that when one translates drama, one has to translate roles, and not only texts. Your poetic and human greatness taught me to seek continuously and acutely where the poetic springs from the drama. And let me tell you: I feel that in your Excellency’s prison-like Denmark with so many cells and dungeons, and in the characters watching and informing on one another, it is not only the reign of the Tudors but also the Bach period that haunts our minds. And let me add, Master, that we have also survived one or two difficult situations. It was not only from chronicles that we learnt about police-governed states that toy with human lives. A Hungarian writer has a good storage of experience to work from if s/he sets out to translate Shakespeare.] (Mészöly, 1998, p. 256)

Perhaps it is not so much Arany's consent that Mészöly is after; these remarks may be directed against fault-finding critics in order to justify his translational decisions. Mészöly himself admits in an interview that he became an essayist out of defence:

On a couple of occasions it was evident that my work had been misunderstood, or I was attacked out of envy or malice because I had the courage to translate plays that had already been translated by the big names. *These attacks forced me to defend myself, and that is how I became an essayist.* (Appendix Seven, my emphasis, also see Minier 2003, p. 2)

Parenthetically, an akin past-evoking technique is used with a similar justifying purpose in an imaginary interview with the 'national poet' Sándor Petőfi, which is the theme of a short story by Dezső Mészöly. In "Füstbe ment interjú Petőfi Sándorral" [An Unmaterialised Interview/An Interview Gone Up in Smoke with Sándor Petőfi] Mészöly uses Petőfi's name and authority in order to voice his own opinion about the different aspects of Petőfi's reception (mainly Sándor Márai's allegedly ignorant and superficial underrating of Petőfi and others) and negative changes in Hungary since the poet's time.⁶⁰ It is, in fact, the time-travelling Petőfi who criticises these issues. He is so much engaged in complaining that the narrator (most probably sharing an ideological consensus with the author Mészöly) can only serve as no more than an obedient scribe who does not even have a chance to ask his questions. Again, an authoritative figure, a 'classic' is used to express an author's opinion of the state of (intellectual) affairs (including the afterlife of the invoked authoritative figure). This act of composing

⁶⁰ The title of Mészöly's prose piece plays upon the title and theme of one of Petőfi's early poems, "Füstbe ment terv" ("Plans Gone Up In Smoke") (1844). A possible literal translation of the title would be [A Plan Gone Up In Smoke] referring to an unmaterialised plan; "Plans Gone Up In Smoke" is the title of Leslie A. Kery's translation (Makkai 2000, p. 373). Lóránt Czigány mentions it under the title "A Plan Which Came to Nothing" (1984, p. 182). The speaker of the poem imagines on the way home how, with what words he will greet his mother, whom he had not seen for a while. However, when the encounter takes place, all the greetings he had thought of escape him in the heat of the moment. The implication in Mészöly's short story is that the interviewer also had a lot to ask or say to Petőfi, but the situation worked out in a different way: he had to let the poet complain and speak out his mind.

literary history (partly rehabilitating an important figure, partly giving credit to one's own name via borrowing an authoritative status) definitely forms a strong parallel with the Arany 'interview', with the exception that in the latter we do not get a narration of Arany's reply, we resort to the translator Mészöly's apology. This digression only serves to illustrate that such an evocation of a past authority is a widespread rhetorical device.

Szabó T. is not specifically trying to find excuses for translating the play, but he still ends up giving a rounded explanation for why he chose to Magyarise *Hamlet* after Arany. When it comes to phrases or passages widely known from Arany's translation, Szabó T. intentionally chooses the translation strategy of retaining these rather than trying to be 'original'. He sees the latter to be worse than retaining whatever has already 'passed the test'. This aspect is similar to Mészöly's, who emphasises that he borrows one hundred and fifty lines from Arany, and also Eörsi, who, especially in his first translation (or rather, revision), extensively borrows from Arany. The translator declares that he was looking for solutions more novel, more modern. Szabó T.'s non-apologetic apology or apologetic non-apology also ranks among the configurations of the rhetoric of discipleship, which characterises much of the translators' discourse on their work.

The typical counter-example is Ádám Nádasdy, who did not want to borrow from Arany. In his opinion, his language is so different from Arany's that quotations from a nineteenth-century Hungarian translation would disturb the viewer. When the author of this thesis challenged him saying that his translation intends to appear very different from that of Arany, he replied as follows:

I cannot outperform Arany's voice. I cannot sound more Arany-like than he himself. I am so different, there's no need me winking at him. That would be unnerving for me, which would result in a worse translation than it is now. I cannot just simply quote a line or two from Arany out of the blue in the middle of the play. When they started rehearsing my *Hamlet* in Debrecen, some of the actors were upset by not being able to say certain

sentences widely known from Arany's classical translation. The directors asked me what I would think about a mixed version. I let them shoulder the responsibility, and after a few rehearsals the actors themselves realised that they didn't feel like inserting quotations by Arany on the stage. (Minier 2002, p. 312)

However, does the attitude of mastery – often intertwined with bardicide – definitely mean a threat to the Shakespearean-Aranyean power mechanism? As Paul Yachnin, influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, notes about some contemporary adapters of Shakespeare, they occupy their position in the field of cultural production through “oppositional legitimation” (2001, p. 42). Their ‘claim to fame’ is exactly the act of bardicide. The phenomenon, however, is not at all new. T. S. Eliot discusses a similar concept in his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent”. Talking of the newly emerging artist, he claims: “You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead” (1928, p. 49). A similar theory underlies Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). An emerging author has had to formulate his style in relation to what has happened on the literary scene before his arrival. To adopt the insight of literary hermeneutics and reception aesthetics: literary language is ingrained with the past, and coming to terms with the past is inevitable for a writer. An irreverent translation or other reworking – perhaps paradoxically – confirms the position of the ‘attacked’, ridiculed or otherwise challenged name. It makes people reread the text, and through this compulsion to revisit the ‘original’, it places that under floodlight. The deconstruction of an idol does not necessarily mean destruction; there is an element of both *de* and *con* in the process. Ben Jonson established himself as a “master-poet” by pointing out how his work was different from that of his predecessors (Yachnin 2001, p. 41). Whether one takes up the attitude of the master – who is confident in his/her work without following patterns – or that of the obedient, respectful disciple one has to take a position *vis-à-vis* tradition.

Interestingly, as the following quotation from Mészöly testifies, the rhetoric of this combat between masters and self-promoting masters may be inscribed with the metaphor of the ghost:

Minden valamirevaló új Shakespeare-rendezés és Shakespeare-magyarázat a XIX. század hazajáró lelke elől menekül – lúdbőröző háttal, vagy neurotikusan nevetgélve, öklöt rázva, vagy fügét mutogatva a kísértő Tegnapnak. Világjelenség ez. Magyar jelenség is? Kétségtelenül.

[Every new Shakespeare direction and interpretation tries to escape from the ghost of the 19th century with goose pimples on its back, neurotically laughing, clenching a fist or poking fun at Yesterday's temptation. This is a worldwide phenomenon. Is it a Hungarian phenomenon, too? Without a doubt.] (Mészöly 1998, p. 222)⁶¹

Mészöly's opinion is also noteworthy because it extends the phenomenon to the realm of the theatre and criticism.

Shakespeare translation and gender

The gender of the translator tends to be a significant factor in translational case studies; in the context of the Hungarian Shakespeare, it is of particular interest. At the commencement of Hungarian Shakespeare idolatry translating Shakespeare was a fatherly act in the establishment of national literature. To what extent is this a genderised issue? To return to Dávidházi's paradigm of the Shakespeare cult as a quasi-religion, one finds this is a cult in which the priests are traditionally male. The almost entire absence of the female translator's voice from the Hungarian Shakespeare is instructive. However, during the period of mythicising there was one attempt made by a female translator, to translate Shakespeare. Emília Lemouton took up translating Shakespeare as a patriotic mission, and she intended to translate all his plays.⁶²

⁶¹ The quotation lacks the paragraph breaks from the source.

⁶² Born of a French father and an Austrian mother, Emília Lemouton came from a multilingual background. Her father, a slightly eccentric French *lektor*, chose to bring Emília up as a child prodigy, perhaps exaggeratedly so. She also published short stories, for instance, "Egy ifjú művész első szerelme" [The first love of a young artist]. Her status as a writer of fiction is no greater than that as a translator.

As Marianne Czeke (1911) points out, in the background of Lemouton's enterprise, one can discern the influence of the high aristocratic literary salons run by the siblings Antónia Zichy (Mrs Batthyány) and Mrs György Károlyi. In these salons the language of conversation was deliberately Hungarian. A straightforward propaganda urging the involvement of women in the budding literary life was also characteristic of the quasi-institutional cultural role of the salons. In the periodical *Honderű*, intended mainly for aristocrats, a call penned by Szarvasy appeared addressing Hungarian patriotic women (honleány), and stressing their duty to serve the country with a pen as ordained priestesses of the Muse ("a múzsa fölönt papnőiként"). This might have inspired Lemouton to embark on this project. She was also encouraged by her father and her fiancé, Boldizsár Adorján, to try her hand at a version of Shakespeare.

In 1845 five of her translations (done from the English!) were published (and never since republished): *Twelfth Night* (under the title *Viola*), *The Tempest*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Measure for Measure*. There are four more translations by Lemouton that have never appeared in print: *The Merchant of Venice*, *All's Well That Ends Well* (under the title *Napot mulva dicsérj* [Praise the Day When It's Over]) *Much Ado About Nothing* (originally under the title *A szerelem hasztalan fáradozása* [The Futile Exertions of Love], then entitled as *Hasztalan epedés* [Futile Languishings]), and *Macbeth*.

The highly patriotic and rhetorical call for subscriptions that Lemouton drafted in 1845 mainly to advertise her expenditure is not treated altogether seriously by literary historian Dávidházi:

The wording is all the more symptomatic because the translator, no more than 18 years old at the time, was ready to absorb contemporary ideals with a youthful enthusiasm and could not help echoing their latent ideological message. Her aim was, admittedly, to 'defend' Hungarian literature from being pilloried, 'alas', as the only one among all educated

nations that failed to naturalize Shakespeare, the author who created more than anybody except God. (1998, p. 145)

However, parts of her call for subscriptions appealed to a section of contemporary society:

Lemouton's references to God, to the cultural obligations of a European nation, to her own patriotic duty and to the asset of possessing a wonderful vernacular can be interpreted as parts of a skilful appeal to the basic assumptions and fundamental values. (Dávidházi 1998, pp. 145-146)

Yet it could be argued that her agenda was more than romanticist patriotism and an exercise in emulation with regard to Shakespeare. Her notion of her reading public is all-inclusive with regard to class, and no bowdlerisation of the sources in the translation is intended. Despite her pronounced intentions, critics have noted that she censored 'indecent' language (yet, even the first Hungarian Shakespeare Committee agreed to advise on toning down the style of bawdy passages). Her explanation for the prose translation of the plays was as follows:

Minthogy a költőt egész pongyolaságában és fenségében szándékozom visszatükrözni, jónak véltem e művet [Tempest] folyóbeszédben fordítani és így hazánk minden osztályának érthetőbbé is tenni.

[As I want to mirror the poet at his most casual and sublime, I deemed it proper to translate this work (*The Tempest*) in fluent speech⁶³ and thus make it intelligible to all classes of our homeland.] (1845 cited Bayer 1909, pp. 51-52)

However, Andor Vas in his critique in *Életképek* contends that the less sophisticated aspect of Shakespeare's language should not necessarily be retained (cf. Bayer 1909, p. 53).

Later commentators have not necessarily been more sympathetic. Lemouton as a Shakespeare translator was accused of being incompetent, for example by Bayer (1909, p. 52) and Dávidházi, who calls her translations mediocre (1998, p. 145). This may be justifiable from a normative perspective, but her work could be reread from a feminist point of view. Her translation of *Twelfth*

⁶³ In fluent speech, that is, 'in prose'.

Night entitled *Viola* appears to foreground the female protagonist, because, in her view, Shakespeare's title does not correspond to the play at all (Czeke 1916, p. 197). The same title was used by Soma Fekete in his 1843 rewriting of the play, so it may have been borrowed from him; still, she insisted on this title, and explained her choice. The title *Viola* was also retained or given by Lévy for his 1870 translation; however, the Shakespeare Committee recommended *Vizkereszt, vagy amit akartok* instead.⁶⁴ Foregrounding the female protagonist in the title can be seen as a somewhat subversive gesture, one characteristic of a voice of her own.

It also needs emphasising that Lemouton worked from an English source as opposed to some of her contemporaries (which does not exclude the possibility of her consulting other foreign – mainly German – material). Lemouton has been charged with exaggerated faithfulness, giving everyday meanings to Shakespearean words, often simply taking the most widespread denotation from the meanings of a word, choosing an inappropriate synonym (her critics here were skating on thin ice), and using lengthy French-style circumlocutions to an exasperating extent.

József Bayer finds faults with her venture from three perspectives that are noteworthy. One, to do with her alleged incompetence, is that she does not give footnotes and she does not indicate what edition she was working from (*nota bene*, even late-twentieth century translators do not always do that). Bayer also mentions that she translated 'easier' plays, implying that tragedies would have represented a greater challenge for her. Against this one can argue that comedies – as texts abounding in wordplay – are by no means straightforward for a translator. Another problem he discerns is linked to the concept of sacredness around

⁶⁴ Miklós Radnóti and György Rónay's translation (completed in 1948) further stabilises this title.

Shakespeare whose translation, as Bayer implies, would require more than one person's effort. He is critical of the fact that Lemouton was quite independent of higher opinion: "maga fölött ítélő bírót el nem ismerve, olyan magánvállalkozásba fog, mely csak többek segítségével ígérhet sikert" [not recognising a judge above herself, she initiated a private venture that could only promise success with the help of others] (Bayer 1909, p. 52).

However, one cannot help but ponder the possibility of another, possibly gender-based, taboo around the translation of Shakespeare. Is the implication that women are not 'eligible' for the task, not suited to touch the sacred text, not allowed to 'interfere' with it? The uproar that surrounded Lemouton's translations could not be about 'competence', because other translations at the time that were mere cultural relocations – as opposed to translations from the 'original' – were much less condemned. It would be a vast exaggeration to claim that throughout translation history across Western cultures women were not supposed to translate canonical texts (or here: almost religiously revered texts). However, the few cases when a female translator's name survives (in the capacity of translator) often come about because of the prestige of the author translated. Another pioneer of translating Shakespeare in European culture, and one historical exception to the rule of the translator's invisibility, is Krustina Batsarova-Zlato'oustova, one of the first Bulgarian translators of Shakespeare. In 1881 she published a translation of *Cymbeline* from the Russian (Shurbanov and Sokolova 2001, p. 45). In her case, as in Lemouton's, it is obviously the author's cultural status that allowed her own name to survive.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Thinking of Lemouton's contemporaries, the wife of Petőfi, Júlia Szendrey, known as 'feleségek felesége' [wife of wives] by the Hungarian public, was the first Hungarian translator of Hans Christian Andersen. It is telling that women in the nineteenth century were likely to translate fairy tales, but not necessarily prestigious, canonical authors or 'high literature'.

Nevertheless, József Bayer admits Lemouton's merit, "Shakespeare összes színműveinek lefordítását illetőleg a kezdeményezés érdeme irodalmunkban egy nőé" [The initiative of translating all of Shakespeare's plays was in our literature taken by a woman] (Bayer 1909, p. 51). (Even this could be read as a slightly patronising statement.) As was discussed earlier, other intellectuals also had in mind the translation of the complete plays, yet Lemouton was the first one who acted on the idea (even though she did not complete the venture).

Female translators of Shakespeare are rare even at a later date in the Hungarian context. More than a century after Lemouton, Magda Szabó – famous as a novelist in the main, but also the author of historical plays such as *Béla király* [King Béla], *A meráni fiú* [The Son of the Meranian], *A csata* [The Battle] – published her translation of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1955). The then student dramaturg Ágota Révész co-translated *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with the novelist and translator László Márton in 1989. Even amongst other rewrites of Shakespeare the female author is relatively infrequent in the Hungarian context.

The process, mechanism and areas of canonisation

An important factor underlying the centrality of Arany's translation of *Hamlet* is the canonised status of Arany's *oeuvre* in general, and his canonicity as a master of the Hungarian language and as an eminent translator, in particular. In the canonisation process Pál Gyulai's 1883 lecture was of crucial importance. Here he emphasises that the foreign-sounding nature that can be detected in Kazinczy's Shakespeare is not present in Arany's (1883, p. 8). "[A] Gyulai által megállapított értékítéletet elsősorban Beöthy Zsolt tette általánosan elfogadottá" [It was

primarily Zsolt Beöthy who made Gyulai's value judgement generally accepted] (Keresztury 1937, p. 77).⁶⁶

Frigyes Riedl was a characteristic scholar of the age of positivism, which laid emphasis on personality and thus favoured a biographical approach in the humanities. In his 1887 monograph he canonises Arany as a primarily epic poet, and he achieves this by presenting him as one carrying out national tasks, tasks which exemplify the Hungarian nation-type.⁶⁷ Positivism had a tendency to describe all phenomena, including ethnicity, by way of categorisation (cf. Imre et al 1998, pp. 53-55):

Valamint a hold földünk körül és ezzel együtt ismét egy távolabbi középpont: a nap körül forog, úgy Arany költészete is kifejezi a magyar szellemet és nép-typust, de e mellett egyszersmind egy sokkal általánosabb irányban is mozog. Az újkori európai művészet uralkodó tendenciái és eszméi irányában. Mint a nagy oceanban, Arany műveiben is két erős áramlat van egymás felett: az egyik a nemzeti, a magyar, a másik alsó, a XIX. század közepének hatalmas sodró eszme-áramlata.

[As the moon circles around our earth and by this around a more distant centre – the sun –, Arany's poetry expresses the Hungarian spirit and nation-type, but at the same time it moves in a much more general direction too: towards tendencies and ideals of modern European art. As in a great ocean, there are two strong currents in Arany's works one beneath the other: one is the national, the Hungarian; the other, the lower, is the powerful flow of the intellectual currents of the mid-19th century.] (Riedl 1904, p. 87)

Oddly enough, when he identifies European features in Arany's personality, he mentions pessimism and psychological analysis, pantheism (merging with nature), realism and political consciousness. As Riedl elaborates,

Arany epikus költészetünket a magyar nép eredeti typusaival, a népköltészetnek naív felfogásával és nyelvkincsével gazdagítja. Arany maga a magyar embernek, költészete a magyar népköltészetnek eszményítése.

[Arany enriches our epic poetry with authentic types of the Hungarian people, a naive perception of folk poetry and folkloric language. Arany is

⁶⁶ Other literary historians and biographers who followed in the line of canonisation are Négyesy, Császár (his biography was published in 1926), László Gyöngyösy's more detailed and anecdotal biography (1901), Ferenc Szinnyi's thoroughgoing study of 1909, Frigyes Riedl's seminal work of 1887, and Géza Voinovich's three-volume monograph.

⁶⁷ This thesis cites the third, revised edition of the monograph from 1904.

the idealisation of the Hungarian man, and his poetry is the idealisation of Hungarian folk poetry.] (Riedl 1904, p. 95)

The issue of being ‘Shakespearean’, in other words, the question of authenticity, comes up in the context of the translations. Riedl strongly canonises Arany as a translator of Shakespeare, and markedly, of *Hamlet*, when claiming that on the basis of these texts, he is the most outstanding or (literally:) first (“legelső”) Hungarian Shakespeare translator, his best translation is *Hamlet*, and his translations are even more Shakespearean than those of Schlegel (1904, p. 289). The latter is a crucial point of reference, since Schlegel was a major authority and model at the time, and presenting Arany as superior to him considerably enhances his authoritative status. The chief criterion is fidelity, being close to the original as much as possible:

Ha fordításait más híres fordításokkal vetjük össze, mindig azt fogjuk tapasztalni, hogy az övéi értelemre közelebb állnak az eredetihez. Általán mondhatni, hogy hívebb Schlegelnél, ki a leghíresebb Shakespeare- és Droysennél, ki a legjelesebb Aristophanes-fordító.

[If we compare his translations with other famous translations, we will always notice that his translations are closer to the original in terms of sense. In general we can say that he is more faithful than Schlegel, who is the most famous translator of Shakespeare, and Droysen, who is the most outstanding Aristophanes translator.] (Riedl 1904, pp. 288-289)

Riedl briefly compares Arany and Schlegel from various perspectives, and proclaims Arany as the ‘winner’:

Arany a drámai részeknek, az erős, kevés szavú kifejezések visszaadásában, a német Schlegel a lyrai elemekben (érzelmek, hasonlatok) remekel. Egészben véve Arany fordítása szerintem shakespeare-ibb mint a Schlegelé. A Schlegel Shakespeareje megszelídített Shakespeare: ezek a phantastikus szögletek lyrailag le vannak csiszolva; ez az erőszakos, sőt néha ízléstelen vad erő mai ízlésünkhöz szelídül, a nemes gyümölcs vad zamatját kerti édesség váltja fel. Arany, ámbár nyelve távolabb esik az angoltól, mint a német nyelv, e részben mégis közelebb jár az eredetihez, mint Schlegelék.

[Arany is excellent at rendering dramatic parts, terse expressions, while the German Schlegel excels in the lyrical elements (emotions, similes). In my opinion, Arany’s translation is more Shakespearean on the whole than Schlegel’s. Schlegel’s Shakespeare is a tamed Shakespeare: these gorgeous corners are poetically toned down; this violent, what’s more, sometimes rough savage force, is tamed to the taste of his day, the

sweetness of a garden takes the place of the wild aroma of the noble fruit. Arany, even though his language is more distant from English than German is, is still closer to the original in this respect than Schlegel and company.] (Riedl 1904, p. 289)

Riedl's assessment of the translations is formulated to support his notion of Arany as a primarily epic poet. This view survived up to the 1980s as a governing principle of Arany studies. Riedl mildly downgrades Arany's poetic force in the translations in order to highlight his epic skills. It was mainly with the postmodern turn in Hungarian criticism that Arany as a lyrical poet was re-discovered:

A fordított mű tömörségét mindig eléri, a gondolatbeli részeknek is méltó párját adja; csak a tisztán lírai elem, a könnyű báj visszaadásában marad néha az eredetinek szépségén alul.

[He always achieves the density of the work translated, he renders ideas accordingly, too. It is only in the rendition of the purely poetic element, the light charm that he sometimes does not live up to the beauty of the original.] (Riedl 1904, p. 289)

Riedl's rhetoric displays its own uncertainty, with phrases such as 'in general', 'other famous translators', and so on. In this way, the statement loses its persuasive force. However, Riedl builds his argument cleverly in the main. He first introduces Schlegel as the most famous Shakespeare translator, and he continues to assert that Arany as a translator is even more faithful than Schlegel.

Hungarian literary histories written in English also stress Arany's linguistic excellence and the prominence of his Shakespeare translations, especially of *Hamlet*. Even though Joseph Reményi's concise literary history – *Hungarian Writers and Literature* (1964) – mentions Arany's translation work only in passing, a great deal of attention is paid to his status as an *arbiter* of linguistic taste. Arany is praised as "a supreme teacher of his nation" with a "mastery of words" (1964, p. 106). "The focal point of his art is his Hungarianism" (p. 106), Reményi continues. The brief reference to his translations contends that they "prove the rich poetic and communicative nature of

the Hungarian language, when used by a master” (p. 116). This would indeed support the notion of elevating the language to the level achieved by more advanced European nations. Reményi’s chapter on Arany is rich in highly subjective statements and superlatives, such as “Arany is the greatest artist of the Hungarian language” (1964, p. 110). The former is a quotation from a lexicon of Hungarian literature (*Magyar irodalmi lexikon*) from 1926. Needless to say, these claims are as difficult to prove as the glorification of any deity can be proved in a teleological way.⁶⁸

Moreover, with an instructive turn of rhetoric, Arany is presented as an almost untranslatable poet due to his supremacy in his own native tongue:

William N. Loew, Nora de Vally, Dorothy M. Stuart, and Watson Kirconnell translated some of his poetry into English. But there are no translations (although Watson Kirkconnell’s are admirable) in which the Hungarian poet’s genius appears in its fullest expression. It is sad to say that he does not occupy his deserved place in world literature. (1964, p. 106)

More recently, Lóránt Czigány asserts:

Arany’s poetic profile would be incomplete without mentioning his Shakespeare translations. Like other great poets of the 19th century – Vörösmarty and Petőfi – he also made translations, and his versions became *national classics*. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1864), *Hamlet* (1867), and *King John* (1867) bear witness to his scholarship and profound understanding of the Bard. (1984, p. 205, my emphasis)

An overt marker of the centrality of the Arany’s *Hamlet* is that – despite being a translation – it has a considerable reception history of its own, which specifically discusses Arany’s *Hamlet* as opposed to *Hamlet* as such (for example Géher 1996 and Lorant 1996).

Miscellaneous translations of *Hamlet*, namely by Árpád Zigány (1899), Béla Telekes (1901) and Attila Szabó T. (1929) had no authority behind them to back them up and secure them a place in the canon (no matter how changeable

⁶⁸ In Reményi’s literary history, Petőfi is also celebrated as a “master of this language” (1964, p. 102).

that position may be). The translations from the turn of the century were not connected to a new edition of Shakespeare, and there were no literary historians or critics drawing attention to them. They have not been reprinted; for a long time it was only Arany's translation that was republished in a variety of collections (for example, in the 1948 and 1955 collected works of Shakespeare) and on its own. These scattered examples of retranslating classics, where there was a canonical translation already in existence, were almost doomed to oblivion.

The majority of university and college curricula and, much more typically, secondary school required reading lists, have also confirmed the position of Arany's text.⁶⁹ The established practice of covering only one translation of a work in a class even if there are more available is a similar, though psychologically understandable process – an insistence on having a single true version of every story. There is a strong tendency to teach only the canonical translations, even though for secondary school students the contemporary ones would be more palatable, and comparing the different translations, especially at a university level, would result in a much better understanding, since different translations may point towards different readings. Again, one needs to be careful not to view critical material written on the basis of a translation as if it related to the 'original' (cf. Minier 2003a). Translations are not equivalent counterparts of the 'original'; the tutor should but frequently fails to clarify for the students that 'the work' has undergone an interpretative and creative process called translation.

⁶⁹ Regarding the secondary school Shakespeare canon, it is *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* that are highly anthologised and taught. One of the reasons for this might be that scenes from these two plays were performed at a very early stage of the Hungarian Enlightenment.

The theatre

Another cultural platform where the centrality of Arany's *Hamlet* prevails is the theatre.⁷⁰ Arany's text has been regularly staged since the year it was first published (it premiered on 9 September 1867) and today, despite the existence of alternative translations, it is still the one chosen even for some experimental productions. Among these examples the 2001 *Hamlet* at the Kolibri (dir. János Novák) stands out, which – aiming mainly at a children's audience – transferred the play to a home farm (the characters being presented as animals). For such artistically or ideologically challenging performances, one might assume that a contemporary translation might be more suitable. From another perspective, however, the juxtaposition of a pristine text and modern *mise-en-scène* might also achieve a noteworthy effect. As the Eörsi case study will demonstrate, there are numerous, albeit often anonymous, examples of dramaturgical adjustments to the text; these updated versions, as many theatre-makers hope, still carry the essence of the 'original' (Arany's text). Due to the same importance attached to Arany's translation other translations are very rarely staged. As mentioned above, there are no records of Zigány's or Telekes's translations ever being staged, while Mészöly's work has been performed only twice: in a more traditional production directed by János Ács in Új Színház [New Theatre], Budapest, in 1996 and in the 1998 experimental, multi-media production at Miskolc, directed by the polymath artist 'Müller Péter Sziámi'. Nádasdy's translation, as Part Two will elaborate, has been transferred to the stage three times. More surprisingly, even the most recent Jánosházy translation is so far unstaged.

⁷⁰ Between 1867 and 1907 it had sixty-eight performances in the National Theatre in Budapest.

From the 1980s onwards there has appeared a practice of retranslating Shakespeare plays that already have canonical Hungarian translations. With regard to *Hamlet*, various factors necessitated this process, including the increasingly archaic character of Arany's language (this is examined in Chapter Three). Jan Kott's 1964 book, – under the English title – *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*), had an immense influence on the staging of Shakespeare at that time, even in Hungary. An extract from the book was translated into Hungarian as early as 1964 by the scholar Endre Bojtár, and appeared in the journals *Dialog* and *Helikon*. The full translation of the book by Grácia Kerényi was published in 1970. The Kottian influence worked *in tandem* with the influence of Peter Brook's visiting performances (for instance, his 1970 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). One of the notable Hungarian theatre critics, Tamás Koltai, even wrote a book on Brook (1976). To present Shakespeare as a contemporary one needs contemporary translations which allow the average spectator to understand every word. The 'opposition' argued from a different perspective: Arany's translations are perfect, they do not need retranslating. The latter position disregarded a crucial point: it was not Arany that was retranslated, but the plays of Shakespeare, in order to provide some alternatives to the already existing translations. Many a receiver cannot help but compare the new versions to the well-known one. In this sense, the canonical translation may become part of the concept of the 'original' (either in the retranslator's or in the receiver's mind), part of the intertextual network around the new translation.

The workings of the taboo: Eörsi's revision of Arany's *Hamlet* as a case study in dramaturgy and retranslation

There was and, to some extent, still prevails an intermediary theatre practice between using the canonical translation *per se* and retranslating the classic from English, and this is the revision or dramaturgical adjustment of an existing translation (here: Arany's text) for the stage of the day. Such adjustments of the translations (which are indeed treated as 'originals' in such enterprises) have been widespread and customary, if not ratified practices in (and most probably beyond) the Hungarian theatre; however, attaching a name to these 'in-between' or mongrel versions was rather unusual. This is what happened to István Eörsi's revised version of Arany's *Hamlet* (1983), which rapidly became famous and infamous as 'Eörsi's *Hamlet*'. It should be born in mind, however, that Eörsi's first version is a theatrical text with significant omissions (it is, in fact, a promptbook version), so it is not even a 'complete' text in a literary sense. (This is not an imperfection of the text, since it was not meant for readers in the first place.) In spite of that, it has had a great influence on issues of literary and theatrical translations.

The first major debate to do with the retranslation of Shakespeare was inspired by this revision of Arany's translation. This was commissioned from Eörsi by the Csiky Gergely Theatre in Kaposvár, which was viewed by many as the leading provincial theatre at the time.⁷¹ What Eörsi did in this first version was a reverential 'rectification' of Arany's text. Even though he consulted an English edition, the main concern of this project was not retranslating the text from the

⁷¹ István Eörsi (born 1931) is a playwright, poet, essayist, dramaturg and translator. Many of his plays share a number of characteristics with the Hungarian theatre of the absurd. He has promoted American beat poetry in Hungary by translating poems by Allen Ginsberg and others and by organising poetry readings. During the communist era in Hungary, between December 1956 and 1960, he was imprisoned for political reasons. Eörsi is devoted to the cause of translating Shakespeare into a contemporary idiom.

original but prolonging the stage durability of Arany's text. Famous passages, such as the "To be or not to be" soliloquy or *sententiae*, were left almost intact – in the very same form with which audiences would have recognised them.

With retrospect, Eörsi clearly recognises the shortcomings of his methodology. The problem seems to be the lack of a unified style or authorial voice in the translation. The revised (and interpolated) script had an uncanny feel to it due to a juxtaposition of familiar and unfamiliar elements. Here is his recollection from an interview conducted for the purpose of his thesis in 2002:

When I took up the job, I decided to try and preserve whatever was unsurpassable in Arany's text. I got a loosely typed copy of Arany's text from the theatre, and I wrote my corrections on the line above. Of course I didn't alter everything. The result was a catastrophe. Arany's translation is so much a part of our national heritage that the more educated members of the audience knew it very well, if not by heart. Familiar sentences ended up sounding very strange, or vice versa: an unfamiliar beginning would turn into a well-known phrase. Géza Fodor, the celebrated dramaturg, said it was not the characters fighting against each other but the two texts. (Appendix Six)

The rhetoric of the debate has a similar tone to what Douglas Robinson (1996) finds in various examples of Western discourse in connection with the taboo on translation (and occasionally retranslation, although the latter is not Robinson's main concern, and he does not treat retranslation as a separate issue). Beyond the intellectual level of the Eörsi debate there seems to be an irrational dread of interference with the classic translation, which does indeed seem to have taken the position of 'the original', 'the authentic', 'the sacred' text in Hungarian culture. The unofficial ban on retranslation can be viewed as a variation of the taboo on translation in general, since the widespread and canonical translation is regarded as the primary or originary text within cultural memory. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier comment on the sacrosanct view of Shakespeare's oeuvre in connection with regard to rewriting in general. "[M]uch of the long history of appreciating and thinking about Shakespeare has stressed his unsurpassed

originality, the sanctity of his texts, and the cultural taboo on presuming to alter them” (2000, p. 1).

In the debate over ‘Eörsi’s *Hamlet*’ literary magazines and review sections of newspapers gave house room to different opinions. Tamás Koltai, a leading theatre critic, argued for the retranslatability of Shakespeare texts that are already canonised, and thus, guarded translations. He underlines that retranslating these texts from the original is better than adjusting old translations to contemporary taste and the spoken language of the day. However, he maintains that some of Arany’s translation of Shakespeare is unsurpassable. Thus, in principle, he acknowledges the idea of an adaptation of the Hungarian canonical text for contemporary spectatorship (and he stresses the needs of the theatre here) if the text is adjusted with inspired sophistication (“érzékeny ihlettel átigazítva”). It is an exaggerated and false reverence of Arany’s text against which he raises his voice:

Ami nyugtalanító (és közügy), az éppen az újrafordításokat akadályozó, hamis kegyelet. Működik egy megfélemlítő mechanizmus, már-már terror, ami költőt, műfordítót, színházat egyaránt lebénít. Ezért marad sokszor titkos színházi belügy egy-egy átdolgozás.

[What is unsettling about this – and this is a public matter – is the false worship blocking instances of retranslation. An intimidating mechanism – almost terror – is at work, which paralyses poets, translators, and theatre alike. This is why many times revised versions remain a secret internal matter of a playhouse.] (Koltai 1983)

Paralysis is used as a metaphor here, but Douglas Robinson indeed describes a fear, or rather, horror of corporal punishment for translating or retranslating a sacred text. Robinson provides a good example: a close reading of Abbot Aelfric’s (c.955-c.1010) letter to his secular patron Aethelweard explaining why he is reluctant to translate the whole of *Genesis*. Robinson summarises the

monk's apology as follows; he paraphrases Aelfric's words in – to borrow Dorrit Cohn's term – a quoted monologue.⁷²

He insists, I didn't translate the whole book of Genesis, only half, so that if my translation should fall into the wrong hands, the danger would be minimized; and I'm not going to translate another word, so don't ask me to, lest I have to disobey you or break my word; and if some scribe introduces corruption into my translation, that's his problem, not mine, so don't come hurling your accusations at me. (Robinson 1996, p. 83)

Robinson tends to explain this with an irrational fear of taboo:

His words surge with scarcely suppressed fear, a fear that overrode even a direct command from his bishop, so that even in obeying it, he wheedled the command down to a mere half of the original (translate Genesis), did that half under polite but anxious and insistent protest, and stated flatly that he refused to do any more. [...] But this reassurance still wasn't enough for Aelfric. He still was terrified. He still felt his translation was not right, was dangerous. (Robinson 1996, p. 84)

To return to the debate around Eörsi's 'sacrilegious' translation, Tamás Koltai uses the terms *istenkísértés* (tempting the divine) and *sírgyalázó merénylet* (desecration of a grave) when describing the argumentation of the other party. The language of discussion is interspersed with phrases reminiscent of ecclesiastical language, the idiom of a semi-sacred literary cult of Shakespeare (investigated closely by Péter Dávidházi in *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare*). The writer and literary historian Vargha responded to Koltai, who again replied by criticising the cultic attitude of his opponent:

Vargha Balázs [...] magát a jogot vitatja, hogy valaki egyáltalán makulát találhat Arany fordításán. Egy szent szövegen. Egy sérthetetlen klasszikuson. Ezt nevezem hamis tekintélytiszteletnek, még inkább tekintélyfétisnek.

[Balázs Vargha disputes the very right to find any blemishes in Arany's translation. (As if) in a sacred text! (As if) in an inviolable classic! I call this false reverence to authority, or rather the fetishisation of authority.] (3 June 1983)

Balázs Vargha belongs to the opposite faction to that of Koltai. In fact, it was Vargha's brief article in the weekly *Élet és Irodalom* [Life and Literature] (22

⁷² For the concept of the quoted monologue see Cohn 1978, pp. 12-13 and 58-98.

April 1983) that encouraged Koltai to express his dissent (29 April 1983). Vargha describes his viewing experience of a performance that uses István Eörsi's reworking of Arany's translation. He was appalled by a language that is neither Arany's nor anybody else's but a hybrid version. However, he does not clarify here whether he would object to proper retranslations (done from an English original). He uses the Latin term *perfidia* (treachery, perfidy) to emphasise the unfaithfulness to Arany's work exercised by Eörsi. He finds faults especially with the fact that he hears even the (by now) aphoristic sentences in altered versions. He succinctly summarises what he perceives as iconoclasm in Eörsi's work: "Átdolgozta Aranyt. Átdolgozni merészelte." [He revised Arany. He dared to revise it.] He closes his article with a perfect example of the cultic idiom. "Hallják, mit füttyül a tavaszi szél a Kerepesi temető érckoporsójánál? Hagyjatok békében nyugodni!" [Can you hear what the spring wind is whistling at the side of the metal casket in Kerepesi cemetery?⁷³ Let me rest in peace.] Charging Eörsi and like-minded intellectuals with disturbing the peace of the deceased – with one of the gravest possible of sins – is another well-known trick for those versed in classical rhetoric. However, this is a somewhat emotional conclusion to the argument. This weird necromancy and the commonplace of the graveyard is not unique to Hungarian culture, it appears in the discourse on "the anxiety of influence" (cf. Bloom 1973, p. 65): "Every young man's heart is a graveyard in which are inscribed the names of a thousand dead artists but whose only actual denizens are a few mighty, often antagonistic, ghosts" (Malraux cited Bloom 1973, p. 26). *Hamlet* is, of course, a play which fits this rhetoric very well due to the appearances of the ghost of Hamlet's father and the graveyard scene.

⁷³Arany was buried in Kerepesi cemetery.

Koltai in his next contribution to the debate (3 June 1983) brings in the English translations of Shakespeare as an example to support the necessity for the Hungarian retranslations. He quotes Peter Brook from an interview with Caroline Alexander in September 1974. As Koltai reminds us, Brook explains that he had Ted Hughes translate *King Lear* from English into English because it was too archaic for the film he was making. This parallel is used by Koltai to respond to Vargha, when the latter argues that if the four-century-old English text is good enough for English viewers, the century-old Hungarian text should also be suitable for a Hungarian audience. Besides, Koltai sheds light on the fact that Eörsi is far from being the first person to adjust Arany's (or Petőfi's or Vörösmarty's) translation; he is only one of the first persons to give his name to it. Again, one encounters the problematic issue of authorship and authority, name and power. There have been a number of 'distorted' versions of Arany's translations on the stage, prepared by dramaturgs or directors, but these were usually 'nameless' versions. Koltai mentions these as home-made (or, theatrically speaking, in-house) adjustments ("házilag szövegkiigazítások"). His cardinal example is Laertes's famous phrase "Mi nézi Hamlet bíbelő kegyét". This is Arany's by now absolutely uncolloquial, and, thus, largely incomprehensible rendering of "for [...] the trifling of his favour" (I/3; 5), which, as he claims, was turned into "Mi Hamlet széptevését illeti" [Regarding Hamlet's courting] twenty years before his article. It was by taking personal and open responsibility for this kind of engagement that Eörsi exposed his work to a series of attacks.

"Can one interfere with a translation of classic status by Arany" ("szabad-e belenyúlni egy klasszikusnak számító Arany-fordításba?"), asks the question the translator and dramaturg József Czímer in his contribution to the debate in the weekly *Élet és Irodalom*. Interestingly enough, he turns to Arany's spirit (or

should we say, ghost) to ask his opinion concerning Vargha's argument. This is reminiscent of Mészöly's previously discussed imaginary altercations with Arany and Petőfi:

Szerintem, és még valaki szerint, akinek az álláspontjára többet adok, mint a magaméra, egyértelműen Eörsi István vállalkozásának és Koltai Tamás elvi álláspontjának van igaza. [...] Koltai Tamás feltételezné, mintha Arany János nem támogatná Vargha Balázst az állásfoglalásában. Én tovább mentem, és megkérdeztem Arany Jánost magát, mi a véleménye. És ő teljes egyértelműséggel Koltai elvi álláspontját támogatta. Márpedig drámafordítói kérdésekben én Arany véleményére adok a legtöbbet.

[In my opinion, and in somebody else's opinion, which matters to me more than mine, it is evidently István Eörsi's venture and Tamás Koltai's conviction that are right. Tamás Koltai seems to assume that János Arany doesn't support Balázs Vargha's claim. I went further and asked János Arany himself for his opinion. And he is fully convinced in backing up Koltai's view. And, for that matter, I count on Arany's opinion most when it comes to drama translation.] (17 June 1983)

A main difference underlying the two ways of thinking comes from the intellectual backgrounds of the two disputants. Vargha's background is primarily in literature. For literary scholars, it is quite natural to view a canonised translation as part of the literary *oeuvre* of the translator, and thus, a 'closed' text at least in its material form, yet, 'open' in a broad sense: open to a variety of interpretations. Thus, he guards the integrity of this sacred text – though obviously to a greater extent than one would guard the integrity of many other texts. In this context, it is understandable that there is some resistance to rewriting – that is, materially interfering with – an already completed work, even if it is a translation. Rewriting, which is an act carrying the connotations of copying, duplicating, mirroring, and, at the very least, providing a double, poses a threat to the masterpiece status of a work, since the notion of masterpiece is associated with unrepeatable, incompatible and inherent values. It is only paradoxical on the surface that a 'measurement' of a classic can be constituted by the degree and typology of its adaptation and translation, whether intracultural or intercultural. However, it would only be logical from a literary perspective to accept 'new'

translations (that are not influenced by previous translations of the same ‘original’) as alternative interpretations of the ‘original’ and the intertextual network around it (potentially comprising the previous translations). Also, as emphasised before, it may be a problem in university seminars when some students of world literature are not familiar with the ‘original’, and a nineteenth-century translation may not support, for instance, a postmodernist reading. This applies to academic articles, too, which might find it difficult to prove their points through the translations when they actually want to state something about the ‘original’. Still, such translations often meet with animosity, and the second, third, etc., translation of a work in the same language does not necessarily come across as a different reading of that work.

On the other hand, theatre-makers have a more pragmatic attitude to the act of translation as well as to individual translations. A translation for them is a functional text, an aid to their direction of a performance – not necessarily a text they pay tribute to, but a material they use and sometimes alter to meet their needs. Furthermore, the text can work as a source of inspiration from which they can depart should they so wish. What Jakobson conceives of as intersemiotic translation is apparent in the theatre where in the majority of the productions a primarily verbal text is adapted to the stage (cf. 1992, pp. 145 and 151). One should keep in mind, though, that theatre is not necessarily verbal art. The main focus when ‘staging’ a text is not on the text, but on creating a good production with the aid of the text, even though literary scholars often do not expect much more from a production than paying tribute or doing full justice to the playtext. For this reason, a text that is highly canonical on literary grounds is not inevitably sacred for theatre practitioners; it can be cut or added to, it can be rewritten, and combined with other texts as well as paralinguistic elements.

With regard to the Eörsi debate Károly Szokolay sits on the fence. He allows for new translations, which, if successful, can enrich Hungarian literature, but he does not think these are necessitated by the supposedly archaic nature of Arany's language. He joined the debate with a publication in the academic journal *Filológiai Közlöny* [Newsletter in Philology] complaining about the lack of translation criticism in Hungarian. Drawing on the work of the literary historian Frigyes Riedl, the director Sándor Hevesi, the actor Miklós Gábor⁷⁴, the translator Mészöly, Kosztolányi as a theatre critic, and others, he claims that Arany's translations of Shakespeare are not outdated. A few expressions which are out of use and difficult to understand can be corrected. He also implies that whoever takes up retranslation, is bound to engage in a competition with Arany. The title of his article asks whether Arany's Shakespeare translations should be retranslated ("Újra kell-e fordítani Arany Shakespeare-fordításait?"). His way of thinking exemplifies the phenomenon that in the public mind and beyond there is an overwhelming identification of the canonised translation with the original. This opinion parallels the phenomenon Ádám Nádasdy refers to in an interview:

[M]any people felt that I retranslated Arany's translation into contemporary Hungarian. I was accused of altering the text. Some people said, the original goes like this... and they started to recite Arany's translation. I had to draw attention to the fact that the original is not by Arany, but by Shakespeare. (Minier 2002, p. 313)

At a convention of the Hungarian Association of Writers (Írószövetség) – specifically convened to discuss this matter – György Somlyó, the poet and translator, gave a plenary address on the subject. His is the most scholarly and detailed discussion of the issue from the period. Somlyó sets up a sharp division between drama as reading and drama as theatre. He draws on Petőfi, Hugo and the

⁷⁴ Gábor was an actor famous for his delivery of Hamlet; he is also recorded in Marvin Rosenberg's *Masks of Hamlet* (one of the few Hungarian Hamlets mentioned in English language studies).

modernist Babits, who saw Shakespeare as literature primarily, and the director Sándor Hevesi, who thought of drama as theatre. In Somlyó's opinion, drama lives the life of an amphibian (1984, p. 1140). Its respiration works in two distinct ways: on the page and on the stage. As Somlyó argues, original plays carry the amphibian existence within themselves 'by nature' (that is genetically), while translated works might emphasise one aspect or the other. "[A] fordításnak mint műfajnak a különössége az, hogy rejtélyes módon romlandóbb az eredetnél" (1984, p. 1142). [It is specific to translation as a genre that it is more perishable than the original.] He also points out that what is precious in world literature is that which is retranslated ("világirodalmi érték az, amit újrafordítunk", Somlyó 1984, p. 1142). Looking at the issue from a slightly different angle, he still maintains the untouchable feature of Arany's Shakespeare translations:

Arany Hamletje, Szentivánéji álma a magyar nemzeti irodalom eredeti 'műveivé' váltak, elsőrendű értékei közé tartoznak. Mint a remekműveket általában, műfajukra való tekintet nélkül, inkább magyarázni, megvilágítani, őrizni és ápolni kell, semmint félretenni.

[Arany's *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have become original works and supreme treasures of Hungarian national literature. As masterpieces they should be interpreted, elucidated, guarded and nurtured rather than put aside.] (1984, p. 1142)

Thus, the respective Shakespearean works should not be retranslated because some of their Hungarian 'counterparts' are already masterpieces that should be cultivated or nurtured. However, he does not always make a distinction between revision (the adjustment of existing translations according to the needs of the times) and retranslation carried out from an English 'original'.

The metaphors Somlyó uses to explain the act of revising already existing translations are worth closer scrutiny. He elaborates on the metaphor of artistic restoration as a parallel with what happens when a dramaturg (or someone acting in a similar role, such as a literary adviser or literary manager) introduces minor changes in order to update the language for the sake of the audience (and the

actors who speak the lines). Somlyó quotes this analogy from the arguments evolving from the 1950's edition of the collected plays of Shakespeare in Hungarian without fully agreeing with it. That committee took into account the theatrical call for a revised Shakespeare, at least in the case of Vörösmarty's and Petőfi's translations. The committee viewed this work to be similar to the restoration of classical paintings (Somlyó 1984, p. 1142). It is also Somlyó who uses the metaphor of doing the work of a beautician on the translation. For example, changing the tense from an archaic one to a colloquial one should count as no more than a minor intervention of a beautician.⁷⁵

To give a more diachronic explanation to the phenomenon, dramaturgical work on Hungarian *Hamlets* is as old as their existence. In the early 1840s Vörösmarty as a theatre critic gave advice on what parts could be omitted with regard to Vajda's *Hamlet*: the fight between Hamlet and Laertes at Ophelia's grave, some wordplays that seem untranslatable, Hamlet's instructions to the actors, the fragment about Priam (if there is no suitable actor available for it), the gravediggers' scene (unless it is very well translated)⁷⁶ a certain sleepy Jancsi and the kitchen maid (1841, p. 191). The two latter ones are obviously added characters, most probably for comic purposes (perhaps under French influence, since eighteenth-century French plays have strong servant characters). Bajza praised the clever shortening of the production he saw on 28 January 1843. As he noted, without these cuts the performance would have been too long for the public which was in the process of being acclimatised to Shakespeare (Bayer 1909, p. 197). *Divatcsarnok* also notes in 1855 (Vol. I, p. 254) that the gravediggers' scene was very often omitted, and so was the scene with Fortinbras at the end, which

⁷⁵ For gender-based examples of metaphorising the act of translation see Chamberlain 1992.

⁷⁶ Vörösmarty makes it clear that he does not think the puns in the gravediggers' scene were well translated by Vajda (1841, p. 191).

should be important, as it points to the future and the need for retelling Hamlet's story again and again (Bayer 1909, p. 220). Dezső Mészöly's attitude to dramaturgy is that it is not a sacrilege to abridge, although he finds this more justifiable in the cinema (see Appendix). In sum, were it not for the sacred status of Arany's text, some of the dramaturgical adjustments would go unnoticed by the general public, and perhaps the professional audience would not object to it so vehemently, either.

Let us, however, take the issue of durability versus ephemerality under closer scrutiny. Various critics, including Arany himself, stress the ephemerality of translation, which might, depending on the critic's perspective, justify either a linguistic revision, adjustment of an already existing translation, or the preparation of a 'new' translation. However, one may pose the question: is it only the language of translations that may become outdated? Somlyó's sharp division between the immortality of the 'work' and the inevitable ephemerality of the 'translation' invites a challenge. If, say, Arany's translations of Shakespeare – or at least, certain layers of the idiom – are gradually becoming outdated, why doesn't his other work, for example, *Toldi* or *Buda halála*, become archaic and less comprehensible, too? In a like vein, why don't other works written more or less about the same time in the dramatic or other genres, go through a similar process? In fact, Arany's work is often read by students of different age groups with the aid of a monolingual dictionary or from heavily footnoted editions. Yet, this is often explained by the unparalleled richness of his vocabulary rather than as a natural and inevitable consequence of the passing of time. Both answers are valid: Arany employed a massive vocabulary in his work (he is reputed as the Hungarian poet with the largest vocabulary), but also some of the phraseology he used is by now archaic.

Approaching the issue from another perspective, the fact that very few nineteenth-century Hungarian plays are frequently staged in Hungarian theatres might have something to do with the language of these plays being to some extent archaic. It is only outstanding classics, such as Katona's *Bánk bán* (1814) and Madách's *Az ember tragediája* [The Tragedy of Man] (1861), that are reasonably frequently staged, albeit with dramaturgical 'interference', the function of which goes beyond shortening the playtext for the sake of a contemporary audience.⁷⁷ If a number of other nineteenth-century plays were regularly put on, directors and dramaturgs would not manage without at least some adjustment. The language of an 'original' work is just as exposed to the working of time as the language of a 'translation'. A main difference, however, seems to be that receiving communities are conditioned to accept the 'work' petrified in the linguistic form in which it was canonised, while with translations, the case is more complex. One may rightly say in the 1980s that Arany's translations of *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are markedly nineteenth-century texts and not capable of maintaining the 'fiction' of a Renaissance text in the viewer. It is most likely that it is the 19th century where it transports the viewer intellectually, and not the 16th or the 21st. On the other hand, as expressions from Arany's translations have become part of the language, viewers also might expect those lines on the stage; or they might be confused or disappointed if these lines are missing or altered, or inserted into a more modern linguistic matrix. A possible explanation is that dramatic language loses its force faster: it always has to be fresh, capable of having an immediate effect on the audience. This might be difficult if the actors themselves struggle with understanding certain phrases.

⁷⁷ Interestingly, *Az ember tragediája* is a text that became well-known in a version revised by Arany.

Csaba Szigeti conceptualises ‘internal translation’ (belső fordítás) as opposed to ‘external’ (or traditional) translation; and one of the examples through which he describes this conceptual field is Arany’s unfinished attempt at rewriting Miklós Zrínyi’s Baroque epic *Szigeti veszedelem*, which is indeed a very rarely mentioned piece in Arany’s diverse *oeuvre*.⁷⁸ Arany’s aim was to improve the versification of what he considered to be a great work of Hungarian literature. This is translation from Hungarian into Hungarian; on one level, it is translating from a historical version of the language to the language of the rewriter’s time and, on another, a translation which foregrounds one particular aspect of the ‘source text’, namely versification, which, in the translator’s view, needs improving. As Szigeti stresses, Arany carried out double internal translation: not only did he translate from Hungarian into Hungarian but from Zrínyi into Zrínyi, as he only used words that appear in Zrínyi’s seventeenth-century epic. One may pose the question: is it a case of *Qoud licet Jovi, non licet bovi*? It appears that an act Arany could perform without much justification is not commendable if a later translator has a similar attitude to Arany’s translation of Shakespeare.

Language is in constant change, and texts do become archaic, hence less intelligible for the wider public. However, how can one retain the spirit of the ‘original’? György Somlyó argues that translation is only valid for a limited period of time, and Arany also explains that the translation (history) of a work (in a certain language) may consist of various stages (*fordítási stádium*), and an individual translation represents only one stage (1961, p. 358). This thesis emphasises that both translation and ‘own work’ may undergo intralingual or intracultural translation. Yet, the reception of such translations, whether they take

⁷⁸ The epic is discussed under the title *The Siege of Szigetvár* in Riedl 1906 (p. 62), *The Menace of Sziget* in Reményi 1964 (p. 11), and *The Peril of Sziget* in Czigány 1984 (p. 56).

place with the aim of bettering the ‘text’ or merely updating it, depends on artistic principles within the receiving community.

Szigeti’s notion of internal translation is akin to the dramaturgical adjustment of a translation, yet the latter is, for obvious reasons, concerned with playtexts only. They are similar activities, yet with a different scope and, to some extent, have a different status. The very phrases Szigeti uses to describe the process of internal translation are very close to those appearing in the discourse on Eörsi’s dramaturgical work. Expressions such as *beavatkozás* [interference, meddling] – also used with adjectives like *egyszerű* [simple] and *alázatos* [humble] –, *megigazítás* [adjustment], *protézis* [prosthesis], *orvoslás* [medical treatment], *feljavítás* [bettering by correction], *kiigazító retus* [~adjusting touches] could also be taken from critical opinions voiced on Eörsi’s revision of Arany’s *Hamlet*. Even the sentence – “De mégis, hogy mert hozzányúlni a titáni kézzel összegyúrt sorokhoz?” [But how did he dare touch the lines molded with titanic hands] –, which is not necessarily revealing of Szigeti’s opinion but a reconstruction of how the public might respond to this act, appears as a rhetorical question parallel to Vargha’s exclamation cited above.

A few more factors may be considered when looking at the debate around the issue of retranslating Shakesperean classics in a broader horizon. These include changes in the Hungarian as well as the English language and specifically Shakespearean philology. Eörsi also argued, in the case of his reworking of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, with Arany’s legendary Victorian prudishness. However, as discussed earlier, Arany was against mutilating Shakespeare in translation. Also, his translations of Aristophanes are bawdy according to the ‘original’. If his text reads prudishly today, this is more likely to be due to some of the language, especially the wordplays, having lost their force. Nádasdy, in his

introduction to his collection of Shakespeare translations, proposes that communist cultural policy could also have hampered the emergence of any new translations. The dominant ideology at the time was against having an alternative, a different interpretation – even in terms of translation (2001, pp. 7-8). In this respect, it is not without importance that the recent retranslations have occurred in the period of secularisation (and cultic revival), as Dávidházi termed it. This appears to be the postmodern phase of the Hungarian translation history of Shakespeare, when alternative readings and versions are not only feasible but welcome. Yet, the process is impossible without revisiting the memory of Arany's translation. These additional aspects, all in all, can be seen in the larger context of the complex taboo around Arany, rather than being entirely different from it.

As mentioned above, Eörsi realised that his translation, or rather, adaptation strategy of revision as opposed to translating from scratch, was a false way of translating. Fellow-translators of classics, such as László Márton (retranslator of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*) and György Petri (retranslator of plays by Molière) voiced a similar opinion in the 1990s. Without being commissioned, Eörsi translated the play again, adopting a new methodology. It is an irony of literary and theatre history not to have taken much notice of his second version, which merits the term 'translation' more than his first attempt. It is noteworthy that this text has only recently been 'put to the test' on the stage – interestingly, not in Hungary, but in Transylvania (2004, Temesvár, dir. Victor Ioan Frunza). Nevertheless, a close reading of the textual cluster constituted by the New Arden *Hamlet*, Arany, and the two Eörsi texts reveals that Eörsi's two versions are not that removed from each other in terms of language. It is apparent in the 1988 text that Eörsi was mainly translating from English into Hungarian rather than translating Arany into a contemporary Hungarian idiom. Still, he could

not resist the temptation to insert a few well-known expressions and aphoristic quotations from Arany's work into his text. He elaborates on this in a short introduction to his translation in his collected volume of Shakespeare translations as well as in a 2002 interview. He gives an explanation for having borrowed from Arany, but even this reasoning seems to turn into a justification of his decision to divert from Arany:

In this new version I borrowed very little from Arany, with the exception of the occasional line, such as his rendering of "Frailty, thy name is woman", because it is pointless to replace *gyarlóság* ('fallibility') with another noun which would probably not be so apt. If something has been absorbed into our national culture, especially if a phrase has been turned into a saying, it can only be justifiable to change it if there is some meaningful reason to do so. For example, I changed "Kizökkent az idő" [Time has been derailed] – Arany's version of "The time is out of joint". I did some philological research and discovered that Shakespeare was using an image from everyday life here. Arany's *kizökkent* (derailed, dislocated) is beautiful, but I thought the notion of spraining is better suited to this context, making the line even more heart-rending and humane. *Kizökkent* does not ache, *kibicsaklott* (sprained) does. I diverged from Arany here despite the fact that his version has found its way into everyday speech. I couldn't find a better version of a number of word-plays either, but overall I retranslated the play. (Appendix Six)

It is as if Arany had provided a firm linguistic framework into which *Hamlet* material could be inserted. Eörsi's act does not come across as borrowing; it rather seems as if Arany's language had already been there as something unavoidable, deeply ingrained in cultural memory. Even though Eörsi's main principle on this latter occasion was to (re)translate *Hamlet* from English, at the heart of his venture the previous 'translation strategy' – of retaining what is 'unsurpassable' in Arany's text – prevails.

Chapter Three: The Fragmentary Afterlife of Arany's *Hamlet*

“the voices that come to us from the past”
(Joutard cited Nora 1996, p. 9)

The pars pro toto phenomenon

Having elaborated on the ‘sacredness’ of Shakespeare’s text, let us focus now on a particular aspect of this ‘sacredness’, namely, Shakespeare’s afterlife in fragments. In religious cults centred around saints, pieces of relics represent and provide a substitute for the saint, guaranteeing his/her presence even after their death. The phenomenon has survived into modern times. This metonymic transfer is very much at the heart of literary and other cults as well. Even today, movie or soap stars’ belongings and occasionally objects originating from their bodies (such as hair trimmings) can achieve a similar status. Internet or television auctions advertise miscellaneous, yet characteristic, belongings of celebrities, such as glasses, T-shirts, footballs, and so on. A similar approach to memorabilia has characterised cults surrounding creative artists. It also applies to the Shakespeare cult as described by Dávidházi:

Ever since the eighteenth century a growing number of people have been going to Stratford and felt the successive psychological stages of a literary pilgrimage; their pilgrim disposition is likely to make them collect or purchase mementoes of the poet revered as relics, be they little wooden objects made of the poet’s mulberry tree or splinters carved off from his chair. (Dávidházi 1998, p. 16)

Shakespeare’s legendary mulberry tree, whether it was his or not, is a relic that has been torn into innumerable pieces, just like the belongings of a saint or a contemporary popular culture celebrity. In the case of the mulberry tree, it may well be that the original wood was not even used.

Taking this a step further, this thesis argues that textual bodies can go through a similar process. It is not only various (actual or alleged) belongings of Shakespeare but parts of his texts, too, that become cultic objects. Again, the phenomenon is not pertinent to Shakespeare's case alone, but Shakespeare's example is probably relevant to more interpretive communities than any other. A cult surrounding the Hungarian national poet, Petőfi, also works on these two levels: objects and places related to him (the pear tree under which he allegedly composed his last poem;⁷⁹ Kiskőrös, where he was born; Segesvár, where he most probably died); and certain *loci* in his writing. The two short case studies in Part Three of this thesis concerning poems by Arany and Finta – both coterminously intertextual with Petőfi's poetry and *Hamlet* – can be seen in the context of literary cults and memory-places.

One may be reminded of the 'whole' of a Shakespeare play – by a scene, a passage, a certain manner of representation or a recurring element of the drama –, yet these elements often gain a degree of independence. Indeed, there is an assumption, or partially shared conviction, that these passages contain and carry some essence of 'Shakespeareanness' because, as it will be shown in Part Three, in certain rewritings of the play (or its main theme), the skeleton of the great scenes and soliloquies serve to provide the rewrite with an allegedly 'Shakespearean' base, and its author with the 'Shakespearean' emblem.

The thesis seeks to shed light on the possibility of an analogy with religion again, and more precisely, with the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains the notion as follows: "by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole

⁷⁹ This is the subject of a poem by the contemporary Transylvanian poet, Sándor Kányádi (cf. Dávid and Mikó 1972, p. 265).

substance of the wine into the substance of his blood” (1994, p. 310). It can be argued that – similarly to the above phenomenon – parts of *Hamlet*, namely famous phrases, sentences, and soliloquies, are seen to carry something essential about the play, and stand for the play in the manner of a ‘shortcut’. Let us emphasise here one of the less central elements of the definition of transubstantiation, and not the metaphoric aspect (bread becomes body, and wine becomes blood): the metonymic aspect (even the most minute portion of the transubstantiated elements carries the essence of Jesus’s body or blood in its entirety). The cult of Shakespeare is accompanied by the semi-religious belief, or rather, practice that even little snippets of Shakespeare’s work carry the essence of the whole, just as a morsel of consecrated bread or a drop of consecrated blood is believed to carry the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

From a more structuralist perspective, and at the same time, one grounded in classical rhetoric, the phenomenon can be described as a type of synecdoche, namely *pars pro toto*: ‘the part [standing] for the whole’. These crucial fragments of *Hamlet* seem to encapsulate the gist of the whole, and this continuous synecdochic presence in Hungarian culture vouchsafes for a continuity of the Hungarian Shakespeare as a formative factor in the cultural life of the nation. This may be termed the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet*.

This transubstantiation incites pilgrimage or (re)visiting in a metaphoric sense, just as the frequent receiving of Communion is essential to Catholicism. This is why the afterlife of these segments – be it in literature, theatre or scholarly work – is telling. This concept implies more than some scenes being more famous, and thus, more often reworked, than others. For instance, the nunnery scene, owing to its ambivalent language, has been rewritten several times in creative writing as well, but even in ‘translation proper’ it is a demanding task for

the mediator. The phenomenon being circumscribed here has a scope beyond this: even segments as small as sentences or words can live a life of their own, and still invoke the notion of the text they ‘originally’ derive from.

In the Hungarian context this is, of course, more complex. It is not directly Shakespeare but the Hungarian translation that is fragmented in cultural memory. For the Hungarian reader or theatre-goer the fragments tend to come from Arany’s *Hamlet*; this is the version they first encountered. This ‘laic’ afterlife, distorted though it may be, is characteristic of what happens to *Hamlet* in Hungarian translation, without being confined to Hungarian culture. Critical reception is, of course, more concerned with the text as a whole, yet these golden phrases are frequently quoted by critics and literary historians, too. It has to be emphasised that this is the afterlife of *Hamlet* in Hungarian translation, since it is mainly one translation, Arany’s, that these emphatic fragments survive in. One exception allegedly derives from Vajda’s work.

As emphasised in the Introduction, *Hamlet* is one of the *lieux de mémoire* of Hungarian culture. As Nora argues, sites of memory emerged because “society has banished ritual” (1996, p. 6).⁸⁰ They seem to retain an element of sacredness in collective and personal memory even, or perhaps, especially, at a time Dávidházi would call a period of secularisation with regard to the Shakespeare cult. Nora asserts that a memory-place is “a templum [...] singled out within the continuum of the profane” (1996, pp. 19-20).

These fragments of *Hamlet* represent one of the ways cultural memory stores *Hamlet* and keeps it ready for revivification. In fact, it may be argued that these fragments are memory-sites in themselves as, in some cases, their ‘origin’ is

⁸⁰ Assmann 1996 and Assmann 1999 also offer invaluable guidance in the study of cultural memory.

unclear. Even for those who associate a particular fragment with an ‘author’, it may vary with whom they associate the fragment: Shakespeare, Shakespeare and Arany, or just *Hamlet*. Mary Warnock’s notion of *habit memory*, or the conventionalisation of memory, will shed light on an important aspect of this cultural process. This theory suggests that by the ‘independence’ of a memory, or a particular instance of it, the ‘original’ context or ‘meaning’ of that memory will fade:

[T]he more purely conventional a memory becomes, so that it can be ‘called up’ or repeated without thought, the less it is capable of bringing us to the truth to which, given luck, patience and effort on our part, involuntary memory may lead. (Warnock 1987, p. 95)

These aphorisms are part of a national unconscious, and thus, a collective memory. However, as it will be seen from the examples, private memory is also crucial here. These semi-Shakespearean passages (Shakespeare turned into and speaking in Hungarian) become memories that do not only belong to a collective, national past but also to many individual pasts. There is a sense of ‘it belongs/belonging to my past’ about them.⁸¹ They are deeply ingrained, encoded in the mind, and stocked in the oft-mentioned imaginary storehouse of memory.⁸²

Obviously, memory does not record these passages as ‘translations’, it records them as the ‘genuine object’. This is why it is not only that Arany is regarded by so many as the creator, the author of these lines, but these lines themselves are also seen as authentic, as genuine. This is also why theatre-goers stopped Nádasdy and asked him why he changed ‘the text’, when all he did was that he prepared a new translation using mainly an English ‘source’. Yet, this came across as interference with Arany’s text, or an alteration of Arany’s text to those who identified Arany’s ‘rendition’ with the idea of *Hamlet*. For them this is

⁸¹ On memory and familiarity and a feeling of pastness see Warnock 1987, p. 76, pp. 21-23.

⁸² On memory as a storehouse see Warnock pp. 6-9 and p. 16).

the authentic, and thus, the ‘original’.

The process is a see-saw of remembering and forgetting, where distortion plays a major role. No wonder that so many of these aphorisms tend to be misquoted when seen as quotations and compared to the actual translation they are supposed to derive from. Sometimes they are consciously distorted in order to suit a certain ideology, such as that of a particular editor of Shakespearean aphorisms; Imre Blanár’s compilation of Shakespearean maxims is a typical example (see Appendix Two).

It also matters greatly whether one first encounters a foreign text in its original language or in translation (in one’s native language or a second language). This is partly why retranslators of *Hamlet* are so much involved with Arany’s text whether they repeat some of it word by word, paraphrase some of it, or try to be visibly different from it. This is the version they are aware of since childhood, this is the version they continually encounter in other works in the form of citations, allusions or full-scale rewritings not only in literature (whether in high or popular culture) or other arts, but also in media, in the language of public affairs.

The chief areas of this fragmentary afterlife are translations (after the canonical version new translations often borrow or slightly modify phrases from the canonical one); creative work (literature, theatre and music, as well as popular culture artefacts), including parody; productions (often using these phrases in their well-known versions even in revised forms of the nineteenth-century canonical text); journalism (far beyond performance reviews); and collections of ‘purple passages’.⁸³ The detailed analysis will be two-fold. On one hand, there will be elaboration on which parts of the ‘Shakespearean’ – in fact, mainly Aranyian –

⁸³ The term *purple passage* is used in Shurbanov and Sokolova 2001 (for example, p. 15).

text contribute to this fragmentary afterlife. The following groups of fragments marked by cultural memory need to be identified: a few archaic words from Arany's translation; aphorisms and famous, anthologised quotations other than those that have been incorporated into the Hungarian language; and Hamlet's great soliloquy. It is of major interest how later translators deal with these segments. These same fragments also have a place in later rewritings as intertexts. We need also to be aware of where the modified reiteration of these fragments takes place. On the other hand, at times, interspersed with the close reading of various translations of – if only hypothetically – the same 'source', there will also be focus on where the modified reiteration of these fragments takes place. By discussing these two intertwined issues alongside one another, the rest of this chapter will examine these chunks of texts (which are to some extent textual entities in their own right) function as memory-places.

The detailed linguistic discussion of these passages will be both of interlingual and of intralingual interest, since the different choices made by translators reveal different interpretations of their respective sources as well as different attitudes to the prevalent Hungarian versions of these passages. This chapter intends to illustrate that it is not exclusively interlingual translation that takes place when it comes to translating *Hamlet* after Arany. The intralingual aspect is just as important. Most translators need to take a stance in relation to Arany at certain *loci* whether to borrow or not to borrow. The purpose of the following section is not to screen out philological mistranslations (though some of these will be pointed out). The linguistic analysis is only important in so far as it highlights how influential Arany has, or has not been, on successive translators in different cases. Where there is no borrowing it may be because the phrase is not aphoristic in everyday speech or, if it is, the attitude of mastery takes over in

the translation process. It is also of interest – especially with regard to the great soliloquy – if Arany borrowed from previous translators. Similarly, the main point is not what role the sentence or phrase plays in its dramatic context, although in some cases it is inevitable to refer to this.

The afterlife of exotic archaisms

There are a number of terms and expressions from Arany's *Hamlet* that have become exotic by now. They are no longer easily comprehensible for less educated receivers, including many secondary school students, or theatre-goers encountering the work for the first time. Interestingly, the terms in question live a life of their own, irrespective of their importance within the playtext. Being quoted in intelligent conversation, essays and journalism, they are incorporated into intellectual discourse. Besides, they are constantly recycled in a variety of artefacts, in all major literary genres and beyond. Needless to say, they are part of a jargon not easily attainable by learners of Hungarian as a second language. Despite becoming more and more inaccessible they contribute to the maintenance of the canonical status of the translation they originally derive from. Thus, they further solidify the mystification and cultic position of Arany's text. They are not exotic and mysterious due to a sense of foreignness strictly speaking; their pristine and archaic aura has more to do with the appeal of "the past as a foreign country", in Leo Lowenthal's words (1985).

To examine but a few, such terms include **vérnősző barom** [incestuous beast], Arany's version for 'incestuous' in the phrase "that incestuous, that adulterate beast" (Appendix One item 9) used by the ghost of Hamlet's father to describe his brother. The word *vérnősző* is now an archaism, its meaning is

unclear to most Hungarian speakers, yet the fact that it contains the word *nő* [woman] conjures up the idea of womanising, fornicating rather than incest to less learned Hungarian speakers. The verb *nőszik* is an item in the concise dictionary of the Hungarian language edited by Czuczor and Fogarasi with the meanings: ‘going after a woman in order to win her hand in marriage’ or ‘sleep with a woman’ (1867, pp. 861-862). In fact, the adjectival form *nősző* is also recorded in the dictionary. Thus, *vérnősző* would mean ‘chasing or sleeping with a woman who is a close blood relative or family member’.⁸⁴ In 1984 the translator and critic György Somlyó defends the syntagm as unmatched and irreplaceable. Although he admits that it is outdated for everyday parlance, he maintains that it is perfectly understandable in its dramatic context (1984, p. 1143). This is highly debateable today.

It is noteworthy how the rest of the translations tackle this word and the aphorism in which it appears. Though it is an aphorism only in Arany’s translation, but the subsequent translations are usually measured against this yardstick. It is interesting that Arany (followed by Szabó T., Eörsi 1 and Mészöly) uses *parázna*, a rather general term for ‘lecherous’, and Nádasdy also opts for a word with a more general scope: *szemérmetlen* [unashamed].⁸⁵ Unlike the ‘source’, which refers to a lecherous act conducted outside marriage, the translation here generalises. Arany uses a reversed word order (first *parázna*, then *vérfertőző*), Mészöly’s approach is similar, while Eörsi’s dramaturgical version retains the whole phrase from Arany. Zigány and Jánosházy opt for the word *buja* [lecherous], which carries biblical resonances. The structure of the phrase in

⁸⁴ Related words are *nőszvágy*, *nőszinger*, *nősztehetetlen*, *nősztehetlen*, *nőszülés*. The Hungarian dictionary of dialects, *Magyar Tájszótár*, edited by József Szinnyei lists the compound *nősző-legény*: ‘lad at a marriageable age’ (1893, p. 1527).

⁸⁵ Eörsi 1 refers to Eörsi’s 1983 dramaturgical version, Eörsi 2 to the revised version from 1999 of his 1993 translation.

Jánosházy is the same as in Zigány, the only difference lies in using the currently colloquial variation – *vérfertőző* – as opposed to the regional or archaic version – *vérfertező* – apparent in Zigány. Curiously, the element of adultery is not emphasised in any of these.⁸⁶

Let us see a few examples of the recirculation of the term *vérnősző* in a variety of cultural documents; firstly, in the discourse of performance criticism. The following citations are from the reviews attached to the 1983/84 *Hamlet* in Kaposvár, the production for which Eörsi prepared his first version. “Jordán Tamás [...] ide-oda topogó közhivatalnok sem *vérnősző baromnak*, sem kegyetlen, tudatos gyilkosnak és királynak nem tűnik” [Tamás Jordán’s shuffling clerk does not appear to be either an incestuous beast or a cruel, calculated murderer and king] (Barabás 1984, my emphasis). In another review Tamás Mészáros remarks, “Jordán Tamás nem ‘*vérnősző barmot*’ mintáz” [Tamás Jordán does not portray an incestuous beast] (Mészáros 1983, my emphasis). In the next quotation the critic assumes that Shakespeare, together with Hamlet, saw Claudius as a *vérnősző barom*: “Indítékai sem különösebben izgatták Shakespeare-t, alighanem maga is egyetértett hősével, aki ‘*vérnősző barom*’-nak mondta” [His motivations did not interest Shakespeare very much, he probably agreed with his

⁸⁶ Curiously, Hamlet uses the very adjective *incestuous* again in the dual scene when addressing Claudius before killing him (V/2; 330). Significantly, only two translations – Eörsi 2 and Nadasdy – give the same word in Hungarian (*vérfertőző*) as in the aforementioned aphorism. The rest of the translations, including Arany’s, offer a different word here from the one in the previous passage. This is important because the repeated occurrence of certain clusters of words in *Hamlet* places extra emphasis on certain issues, here on Hamlet’s scorn for Claudius’s ‘incest’. Arany has *vérparázna* here; this may have influenced Zigány and Mészöly, who give the same translation. Telekes has *czéda* [lecherous], which generalises and shifts the meaning: ‘lechery’ as opposed to ‘incest’. It is also a word usually employed with reference to women, so it makes the addressee slightly effeminate or weak, or it might even draw attention to the fact that Claudius was involved in incest with a woman related to Hamlet (so the adjective might at the same time subconsciously imply Gertrude). Szabó T. translates the word as *buja* [lecherous], which also generalises the meaning, just as Jánosházy’s *parázna* [lecherous]. Vajda has a very expressive phrase here: *fertelem embere* [man of abomination]. Eörsi’s dramaturgical version omits the whole utterance in which this phrase occurs. This slight digression is a persuasive illustration of translators not necessarily thinking in terms of clusters of words or images; they do not necessarily give credit to repetitions in the ‘original’. This is another aspect that makes their text and its reception markedly different from that of the ‘original’.

hero, who called Claudius an incestuous beast] (Zappe 1984, my emphasis). It is apparent that this phrase has found its way into the terminology used by theatre experts to describe their horizon of expectations (in Gadamer's sense) as to the role of Claudius, and this happened via Arany's suggestive and powerful translation of the phrase.

Perhaps this is one of the cases when the same quotation is not of such allusive power in the language of the 'original' work as it is in Hungarian; Arany's phrase has a life of its own. The phrase *vérnősző barom* is present as an intertext in literary works; for instance, it provides the title of Béla Bodor's recent volume of poetry: *Ragtime a Vérnősző Barommal* [Ragtime with the Incestuous Beast]. In this there is a cycle entitled "A Vérnősző Barom", which contains poems written in the third person singular about a fat, rotting, essentially vegetating beast. It is the hedonistic aspect of the beast that the poems focus on; despite the (original) denotative meaning of the phrase, there is no reference to incest in any of the six poems. It is apparent that Arany's phrase inspired Bodor through the widespread connotation of 'fornication', and not in its original meaning.⁸⁷

There is also an illuminating example of the phrase being used in popular culture. An episode of the Hungarian soap opera *Barátok közt* [Among Friends] running on the commercial channel RTL Klub included the phrase *vérnősző barom* (without any formal modification) in a character's lines when describing another character of the soap (5th September 2002).⁸⁸ This – far from unique – instance convincingly demonstrates that popular culture is not void of the *Hamlet*

⁸⁷ The book contains another poem – "öreg nőcsábász, lámpafény, eső" [old womaniser, lamplight, rain] – that has a similar character, though this character is Italian. This is in the cycle "Folytatódó légzés" [Continuing Breath].

⁸⁸ This observation is based on personal viewing experience.

influence; it is indeed infiltrated with *topoi* and devices deriving from high culture, even if these are recontextualised in a more or less ironic way.

Another relevant, though less quoted, archaism is the adjective **bóbás** [bun-wearing] – Arany’s solution for *mobbled* (Appendix One item 3) – which is an adjective describing the queen of Priam in the story presented by the First Player in Act II Scene 2. The contemporary denotative meaning of the English word was “having the head or face covered by a muffler” (Shewmaker 1996, p. 284); ‘with face muffled’, (Jenkins in Shakespeare 1982, p. 267). The ‘assessment’ of the translation of this *locus* is further complicated by the fact that the Folio has a different word here: *inobled*, which is interpreted as “stripped of her majesty” (Schmidt 1971, p. 589). The use of the adjective *bóbás*, a variation of the word *bubás*, was recorded in Nagyszalonta, where Arany was born (cf. B. Lőrinczy 1979, p. 604). *Bóbás* and *bubás* are both dialectal terms referring to a female hairstyle: the bun. Kosztolányi also mentions in his essay on his translation of *A Winter’s Tale* that *bóbás* is a rare dialectal variant of *búbos* (1942b, p. 200). The phrase is emphatic in the original too, as it is unclear why Hamlet repeats the term: whether to question its pertinence or merely to savour the word (cf. Jenkins in Shakespeare 1982, p. 267). Today the meaning of the Hungarian term is absolutely unclear to the general public, except for language historians and dialect experts. It is not accidental that the only translator who borrowed it from Arany was the one immediately superseding him: Árpád Zsigány. Even as early as 1901 Telekes introduced the term *zilált* [dishevelled]. Such an approach is not without precedence, because Vajda has *rongyos* [ragged], suggesting either poverty (it is a wartime story) or unkemptness, neglect. On the other hand, it is markedly different from the version Arany chose later, as it names a physical state in an abstract way, and not a piece of clothing. Szabó T. returns to the tradition of

naming the garment worn by the queen, and uses the adjective *fejékes* [with a head dress], which seems rather apt to refer to royal highness. Eörsi in his dramaturgical version as well as his ‘independent’ translation opts for the term *fátyolos* [veiled]. One of the reviewers of Eörsi’s translation, the academic Géza Kállay, prefers Arany’s *bóbás* to Eörsi’s alternative. He argues that *fátyolos* conjures the image of a young bride (which is not relevant to the context), while *bóbás*, unclear in meaning though it may be, can be associated with a more mature, and not so innocent woman, whose beauty is fading (Kállay 2000, p. 13). Mészöly uses the slightly more archaic variant of the same adjective: *fátylas*, derived from the same nominal stem: *fátyol*. The inspiration may have come from István Eörsi. The most recent translation, Nádasdy’s, uses a synonym of this: *leples* [~cloaked]. Jánosházy’s solution sticks out completely. It is *eltorzult* [deformed, disfigured], which refers to the state of the face, and thus, the pain behind the deformed face, rather than hair or its cover. This seems to keep close to the ‘original’.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Other exoticisms include *merő* [pure, complete] meaning ‘solid, stiff’ (Appendix One item 4) and *vegyétek észre bár, de nyelvre ne* [take it to your mind(s) but not to your tongues] (Appendix One item 34).

The afterlife of aphorisms

I: Collections of Shakespearean aphorisms and related sites of the fragmentary afterlife

There are numerous sites where the fragmentary afterlife of aphorisms flourishes. Apart from creative art, on which we shall reflect later on, there are other oral and written practices and other cultural customs that contribute to this afterlife. As Pierre Nora observes, “Modern memory is first of all archival” (1996, p. 8).

Collections of Shakespearean aphorisms represent a case in point. Compilations of Shakespeare quotations in English have been published since the mid-eighteenth century. As Margreta de Grazia (1991) explores, the first such volume was William Dodd’s *Beauties of Shakespear* (1752). The fact that the passages were derived from Shakespeare, or which text they were actually taken from, were not very important at first. It was more significant that these time-proven prefabricated structures of language could be used as aids in oral and written communication. Margreta de Grazia sees the phenomenon of such books as a summation of the commonplace tradition. This does not refer to the commonplace in the current, rather pejorative, sense of the term but to *loci communes* in classical rhetoric. The process was also connected to editorial practices, since Dryden, Rowe and Johnson extensively footnoted the ‘Beauties and Faults’ of Shakespeare. Such editions undoubtedly created the impression that these “shining passages” (Pope 1725 cited de Grazia 1991, p. 62) may be more important for certain ideological reasons (mainly for greater *decorum*) than other parts of the plays. Later on Shakespeare concordances appeared with thematic divisions, introducing what Shakespeare’s views were on a certain subject. The first of these was Andrew Beckett’s in 1787. This cultural practice already implies

the acceptance of Shakespeare as an authoritative figure, an arbiter of taste, and his work as a storehouse of moral wisdom. There is a certain naivety about presenting bits of dialogue or soliloquies spoken by a variety of characters as Shakespeare's opinion or direct message. It is a matter of interpretation whether Shakespeare's plays have *raisonneurs* in them, but even in debatable cases, when a character may be seen as a mouthpiece of the author, an unproblematised identification of the views of the character with those of Shakespeare would not hold water. Even to this day, as Dávidházi notes, it is part of the Stratford pilgrimage for many to acquire "booklets of choice quotations from the Bard" (1998, p. 16).

In Hungary, too, the teaching and use of classical rhetoric has been very important, and this tradition has not completely ended; it may be found in some universities and – in simpler and updated versions – in some church schools. The collections of Hungarian Shakespeare aphorisms may be a modified continuation of this tradition; however, in the context of this thesis, their root in the sacredness of *Hamlet* is equally germane. The fact that these Hungarian aphorisms or purple passages are re-selected and reprinted in different collections is in itself indicative that *Hamlet* (along other culturally marked passages from Hungarian translations of Shakespeare) is a site of memory. Some of the books in which Shakespearean aphorisms appear consist of exclusively Shakespearean material, while others are more eclectic in terms of sources.

One of the earliest Hungarian tomes of Shakespeare quotations was edited by a certain Dr Imre Blanár Jr.⁹⁰ The curiosity of this book is that the editor, who studied in the United States and held a rather flattering opinion of himself as a self-made top intellectual, prepared his translation of all the passages quoted,

⁹⁰ The book was published with no date. The acquisition stamp in the copy held in the Hungarian National Library, the OSZK, makes 1927 a likely year of publication.

using, yet not acknowledging, Arany's and other famous translators' wording. For example, when reworking Arany's famous rendering of "thou canst not [...] be false to any man" – *ál máshoz se lesz* [you won't be false to anybody else either] – Blanár replaces the archaic *lesz* [you will be] by the colloquial *leszel* [you will be] (Appendix Two item 37).⁹¹

It is important to note that in Blanár's bilingual collection, various linguistic adjustments are made. He changes outdated and regional terms to more colloquial ones. He omits terms that would hamper the quotation from becoming sufficiently aphoristic (for example, direct addresses: sir, Horatio, and so on). He treats these quotations as self-evident truths, he even manipulates them, changing them, if necessary, so that they fit his ideological purposes. It is a collection that makes Shakespeare sententious, even at the expense of forgery or falsification. For instance, he prepares one 'chocolate-box' passage by glueing together two different chunks of the play: fragments of Polonius's instructions to Laertes, and those to Ophelia. Sometimes a longer speech is cut into sections. Blanár divides the great soliloquy into four parts and assigns these as readings for four different days. Polonius's *parainesis* receives a similar treatment; it is sliced into six portions. Blanár includes the name of the character who speaks the respective lines in Shakespeare but, at times, this is misleading (Appendix Two items 7 and 24).

The date to which a quotation is assigned is a purely random one in most cases, whereas in some others it may be intentional. For instance, for the 29th of December the reading is Gertrude's following remark to Hamlet about transience: "Meghal, aki él s a természet útján öröklétre kél" [S/he who lives, dies and rises to eternal life through nature] (I/2; 72-73) (Appendix Two item 48). It is not merely

⁹¹ Nádasdy points out that contemporary audiences find this phrase difficult to understand (Minier 2000, p. 36).

accidental that it is towards the end of the year that one is recommended a reading that tackles death and a possibility of rebirth as part of the vegetative cycle. It comes across as a meditative reading for end-of-the-year self-analysis or a balancing of accounts. For the 14th of February (Valentine's Day) Ophelia's Valentine song is cited. However, it needs pointing out that Hungary did not start celebrating Valentine's Day until the 1990s, when this rather commercialised custom was imported and it is still not nostrified (as it is seen by many as a mere sign of a process of westernisation). In Blanár's time only educated readers would have known that this is the day of lovers in English culture.

László Országh (1964) consults the collection of aphorisms entitled *Szájrul szájra* [From Lips to Lips] for his essay on famous Shakespeare quotations in Hungarian. *Szájrul szájra* is a general collection of proverbial phrases and sayings rather than a dictionary of famous quotations from high cultural artefacts, even though it considers educated speech, according to Országh. Thus, it provides further evidence regarding Shakespeare, or rather, his Hungarian translations, have enriched the Hungarian language. Béla Tóth, the editor of this volume, lists twenty-eight aphorismatic quotations from Shakespeare, ten of these being from *Hamlet*.⁹² Little wonder they are all quoted in Arany's translation, except in the case of Appendix One item 8, which is quoted in Arany's "meticulously accurate translation" (Országh 1964, p. 91), albeit with a mistake (*rothadt* instead of *rohadt*). Országh also mentions that it has recently been cited in another version, notably: "Valami búzlik Dániában". He does not attribute the latter to Péter Vajda. The most recent large-scale opus of this kind was compiled by Sándor Maller (1999); he cites the quotations in their well-known translations.

⁹² These are items 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, the beginning of item 5 ("Mi neki Hekuba!", a misquotation of Arany's "Mi néki Hecuba") in Appendix One, and three quotations from the great soliloquy: "Lenni vagy nem lenni, ez itt a kérdés", "A hivatalnak packázásai" and "a nem ismert tartomány" (Országh 1964, pp. 91-92).

It is self-explanatory why most of these purple passages are derived from Hamlet's idiom. In the volume entitled *Bölcs mondások* [Wise Sayings] the editor Annamária Koltay quotes twenty-four sayings from Hamlet, three each from Ophelia and Polonius, two from Horatio, another two from the Rosencrantz and Guildenstern pairing, and one each from Gertrude, Claudius and Laertes – needless to say, all in Arany's words. In general, these aphoristic quotations originate in various parts of the play, yet a number of them come from Hamlet's witty conversations with Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Some are asides, for example the translations of "A little more than kin and less than kind" (Appendix One item 31) and "Though this be madness..." (Appendix One item 10).

Similarly to what occurred in Britain, there are also thematic volumes of Shakespeare's alleged messages on certain topics. One example is the 1990 compilation entitled *Shakespeare a szerelemről* [Shakespeare on Love], edited by the aforementioned Sándor Maller. The above volume contains two quotations from *Hamlet*, both in Arany's translation. The first one is Hamlet and Ophelia's conversation from III/1, from the sentence "De csöndesen!" [But quiet!] ("Soft you now") up to "Hogy amit látok, látom az iszonyt!" [What I see is ...] ("T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see"). This is basically the whole of the nunnery scene (lines 88-163). Maller is philologically correct when he indicates the names of all the translators that he quotes; and he even introduces the passages by contextualising and interpreting them *vis-à-vis* the issue of love. His understanding of Hamlet's behaviour in the nunnery scene is that he had to act as a fool in front of Ophelia, too, he may have suspected that she took part in a 'plot' against him. The other long quotation he has from *Hamlet* is from the graveyard scene (V/1; 235-285), from "Mi! Ophelia!" [What? Ophelia?] ("What, the fair

Ophelia!”) up to “A macska nyávog, és megvész az eb.” [The cat miaows, the dog goes rabid] (“The cat will mew, and dog will have his day”). It is also typical of the collection that every passage is given a subtitle within the volume (a ‘fancy’ title given by the editor), for instance, the nunnery scene passage is entitled “Szakítás” [Breaking-up], while the graveyard one is called “Kétségbeesés” [Despair]. The illusion given to the reader is that Shakespeare had some words of wisdom to offer for all these love-life scenarios.

The detailed analysis of these aphorisms will hopefully shed light on the process by which some of Arany’s versions confirmed their position in cultural memory, in some cases through a retranslation that is reminiscent of the ‘original’ (namely Arany) either because it is very similar to it (in the spirit of the attitude of discipleship) or because it is very different from it (indicating the attitude of mastery). One may wonder whether *proverbialisation* or *aphorismatisation* is the most suitable term to describe this process. To some extent both terms are appropriate, as for some people these are proverbs (especially if they are not sure what name to link to it), for others, they are aphorisms (in which case they might associate a name with the sentence, or at least realise that is not a folk saying, but an authored one). One may allow for some conceptual overlap. As Martin Gray’s *Dictionary of Literary Terms* claims, “Proverbs are traditional aphorisms” (1984, p. 21). Likewise, one would think the term *maxim* implies that there is a sense of an author behind the saying to an even greater extent than behind an aphorism; that is why the former term will be used sparingly. A lot depends on the social stratification of the readership or theatre audience; or, from the perspective of cultural memory, on the interplay between collective and personal memory.

For instance, Dezső Mészöly relates in his *Shakespeare-napló* [Shakespeare Diary] that citations from Shakespeare plays were frequent during

his childhood. These sounded like beautiful Hungarian poems to him. Since they sounded genuinely Hungarian, he did not realise in his early youth that they were translations. Mészöly recalls having been sent to bed as a child by his father on New Year's Eve with the following quotation from Arany's translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (V/1):

Tizenkettőt szólt a vasnyelvű éjfél.
Alunni, hivek; szellemóra ez.
[The iron-tongued midnight said twelve.
Brethren, to bed; this is a ghostly hour.]
("The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.
Lovers, to bed: 'tis almost fairy time.") (Mészöly 1998, p. 52)

Another site where the Hungarian afterlife of Shakespeare prospers is the Hungarian *memoriter* tradition. This represents a case of pedagogical memory (cf. Nora 1996, p. 16). The Hungarian educational system long maintained and, to a much lesser extent, still maintains a practice of making students learn quotations and whole poems by heart. This mnemonic technique originates from a method of teaching ancient Greek and Latin authors. (*Memoriter* means 'from the memory, by heart' in Latin; in Hungarian it is used as a noun for the quotation that is meant to be memorised). The author of this thesis, for example, was instructed to learn a number of quotations from Arany's *Hamlet* – including "Szó, szó, szó" (Appendix One item 1), "Gyarlóság..." (Appendix One item 6) and "Örültség..." (Appendix One item 10) – by heart, alongside his translation of the great soliloquy when studying *Hamlet* at secondary school (around the age of fifteen). For the forthcoming analysis in this chapter a list of bilingual (English and Hungarian) Shakespearean *memoriters* has also been consulted. This was, in all likelihood, compiled for secondary school students. There will be references to it throughout.⁹³

⁹³ The list was obtained from the website
http://enciklopedia.fazekas.hu/memo/William_Shakespeare.htm.

A personal memory of the present writer concerns a winter day-trip to the Hungarian Lowlands where each member of the secondary school class had to draw a piece of paper on which the tutor of the class – who was, at the same time, the literature teacher – copied quotations from Shakespeare, predominantly from *Hamlet*, in Hungarian translation. The citations were supposed to provide food for thought, a fragment of wisdom to the students. Of course, it was determined entirely by chance which quotation(s) an individual student picked up as the cards were turned upside down. The writer of these lines received some dreadful exclamations Hamlet addressed to Ophelia in the nunnery scene, which caused a roar of laughter when everybody read out the ‘messages’ to the rest of the class. The manner in which such school memories remain in the mind is not the least curious of the phenomenon of Shakespeare translation. More generally, such anecdotal evidence also forms part of the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet* in Hungarian.

A related cultural practice that maintains the cult of quotation, including Shakespeare quotation, is the *maturandi’s tableau* (*érettségi tabló*). This is a framed board usually covered in glass, with the photographic portraits of all members of a school-leaving class displayed in the school building. The *tableau* always has a quotation on it – a quotidian for life –, chosen by the class often from Shakespeare.

The – mainly nineteenth-century – cultural practice of the so-called *emlékkönyv* (literally: ‘memory book’) has also kept Shakespearean quotation and, in general, quotation as a cultural practice alive, yet, this is a written tradition. An *emlékkönyv* – let us call it an accomplished young lady’s commonplace book – is an ornate notebook kept by a girl, which she lends to friends, relatives and other acquaintances (for example, tutors) so that they write some personal message in it

– usually by way of some pertinent quotation –, perhaps with drawings, which would accompany the holder of the *emlékkönyv* for their entire lifetime. Small wonder that some of these quotations were from Shakespeare translations. A modernised version of this practice was still in operation amongst schoolgirls when the author of these lines was a child in Transylvania. The above practices emphasise the cultural and psychological importance of repetition: the use of a previously written text or, here, a fragment of a text that has a more or less independent life, in order to express feelings or positions of one's own.

II: Translating the aphorisms

A frequently quoted sentence is “**Frailty, thy name is woman**” (Appendix One item 6), which is later cited in Arany's translation only. Maller has it in his 1999 collection, and the list of *memorizers* also contains it. Blanár also borrows the quotation from Arany for his compilation (Appendix Two item 40). The noun *gyarlóság* [frailty] proposed for ‘frailty’ by Arany was retained by all later translators, except for the conscious challenger, Nádasdy, who ‘replaced’ it by a more specific term, *jellemgyengeség*. In his first version, on which the 1999 Debrecen production was based, he used *állhatatlanság* [fickleness]. Of course this counts as a replacement only if someone sees Nádasdy's translation in the context of Arany's translation, viewing it as a benchmark, and inevitably making a comparison between the two. From another perspective, Nádasdy was merely translating the sentence, not as if there was not an already famous version of it, but disregarding that version, and thus giving the line a chance to reintegrate into the playtext. Vajda in 1839 gave *gyengeség* [weakness], which may reinforce an age-old stereotype of womankind being weak and fragile. There is a semantic parallel between how Vajda and Nádasdy interpret *frailty*, as Vajda emphasises

weakness in general, and Nádasdy focuses on weakness of character, fallability. This must be a coincidence, because Nádasdy does not know Vajda's translation, he only knows of it. Arany's sentence was borrowed by six translators (Zigány, Szabó T., Eörsi 1, 2, Mészöly, and Jánosházy) with minor differences in punctuation. It was hardly changed by Telekes, who uses a different, more general Hungarian word for woman – *nő* – than Arany's *asszony*: a term referring to a married or a more mature woman. Reconfiguring the whole sentence, Nádasdy uses the adjective for female: *nőnemű*. This takes the sentence to a philosophical level, with a possibility of seeing the flaw itself as inherently female, or at least describing it as a human folly typically associated with women. The short *ű* at the end of the word as opposed to the codified *ü* reveals that the translator used *poetica licentia* when giving this rather literary form of the word. In a telling way, in Feró Nagy's rock opera *Hamlet* Arany's version of the line is reassigned to Claudius (1986, p. 8). The rock opera by Lencsés and Horváth includes this aphoristic sentence in Hamlet's lines.

“Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (Appendix One item 8) is another aphoristic sentence in Hungarian translation. Surprisingly, is that the translation in which it became famous is not Arany's. Arany's, with the terse metaphor *államgép* [state machinery], is reasonably well-known, but the frequently quoted version is “Valami bűzlik Dániában” [Something stinks in Denmark]. According to the notes of the Nádasdy collected volume (2001, p. 376), this sentence is from Vajda's translation, but the most authentic Vajda manuscript does not contain this version. It might still derive from Vajda, as the oral tradition affirms, yet this cannot be proved. It may come from a dramaturgically adapted version of Vajda's translation, which may still be linked to the author's – here: translator's – name. Sándor Maller cites Arany's version in

his 1999 volume, probably out of philological rigour (the aphoristic phrase – the alleged Vajda ‘rendition’ – not being traceable) or as a tribute to Arany. The same applies to the collection of *memoriter*s. Eight of the translations use the verb *rohad* (Arany, Mészöly, Eörsi 1 and Jánosházy) or its variant, *rothad* (Zigány, Telekes, Eörsi 2), and the most recent translation, Jánosházy’s, is the only one that fully reiterates Arany’s version. In Karinthy’s parody of a rehearsal of *Hamlet* the playscript includes a combination of Arany’s and the alleged Vajda translation: “Valami rothad Dániában” [Something is rotten in Denmark] (1957, p. 401-402). The ignorant and narrow-minded manager is worried that the Danish ambassador might find this sentence offensive. Nagy’s rock opera makes the chorus sing both “Valami bűzlik” [Something stinks] (1986, p. 6) and Arany’s version (1986, p. 16). The latter is sung when Polonius dies. In Bereményi’s play *Halmi* one may find a trivialised reworking of the aphorism. Two clown figures – translated versions of the gravedigger and his companion – appear as sewage workers in one scene. It is while carrying out this type of work that the Second Clown says: “Szóval... valami bűzlik itt, az biztos” (1985, p. 48) [So, something stinks here, that’s for sure] (“Something’s rotting down there, that’s for sure”) (1992, p. 91).

One of the most often revisited aphorisms is Arany’s rewriting of “**The time is out of joint ...**”: “Kizökkent az idő; – ó kárhozat! hogy én születtem helyretolni azt!” (Table 1 item 12). Logically enough, it is part of Maller’s compilation and the *memoriter* list, and it is recycled in Zigány, Eörsi 1, Mészöly and Jánosházy, with slight modifications in punctuation. The phrase ‘out of joint’ has been translated in six ways. Two of these – *ki van feszítve tengölébül* [has been unhinged/removed from its axis] and *kizökkent* [has been derailed] have a machine-related metaphor inherent in them. These ‘envisage’ time as if it were a machine that is currently out of order. The first solution is Vajda’s, the second is

Arany's, reiterated by the abovementioned translators. These translations could be linked to history as a Grand Mechanism identified by Jan Kott as a recurrent *topos* in Shakespeare's plays. This image envisages political struggle as a staircase leading to power (cf. Kott 1967, pp. 31-32). Nádasdy's *szétesett* [has fallen apart; literally: 'into parts'] and the corresponding verb, *összerakjam* [piece it together], can also be interpreted as a machine or toy metaphor, though it is less overt than the other two. Three other translations, Telekes, Szabó T. and Eörsi 2 personalise time with verbal metaphors. Telekes's very expressive version refers to a mental disorder: *meghibbant* [is off its chump]. Szabó T.'s and Eörsi 2's choices are both metonymic: they use a verb related to a part of the body (yet the expression can stand for the whole): *kificamult* [sprained] (Szabó T.) and *kibicsaklott* [has been sprained] (Eörsi 2). In these cases the disorder of the state is transfigured by an image of physical ailment. As Eörsi elaborates in an interview conducted for this thesis:

Arany's *kizökkent* (derailed, dislocated) is beautiful, but I thought the notion of spraining is better suited to this context, making the line even more heart-rending and humane. *Kizökkent* does not ache, *kibicsaklott* (sprained) does. I diverged from Arany here despite the fact that his version has found its way into everyday speech. (Appendix Six)

It is also very important whether the Hungarian *idő* [time] or *kor* [age, epoch] is used in a translation. The latter, more topicalising term, was only used in Telekes's and Szabó T.'s version. Nádasdy's option – *világ* [world] – demonstrates how much the translator wants to make his text different. The phrase 'set it right' has been translated in accordance with the metaphors chosen by the translators. Interestingly, Arany, and after him, most other translators use a verb with reference to pushing: *helyretol* [push something back to its place] (Arany, Zigány, Eörsi 1, Mészöly and Jánosházy); and *helyrelök* [push something back to its place] (Telekes). This, as Eörsi observes, evokes the image of a train carriage

which needs putting back on the rails. Similar solutions are Szabó T.'s now archaic *helyreüt* [fix something back to its normal state] and Eörsi 2's slightly less intense *helyre rak* [put something back to its place]. Vajda's rather abstract version contrasts with these tendencies; it envisages an intellectual contest between fate and the individual: *vele engemet vitába hoz* [brings me into a dispute with it (time)].

How 'cursed spite' has been translated is also informative about the *Weltanschauung* underlying a translation. Vajda puts the emphasis on fatality when he chooses *gonosz Sors* [wicked fate], with a capital letter. Arany's concise *kárhozat* [damnation] derives from religious terminology, referring to the state of souls admitted to hell. This metaphoric expression reappears in Zigány, Eörsi 1, Mészöly and Jánosházy. A few translators use the noun *átok* [curse] either in a verbal phrase – Nádasdy's *átok ül rajtam* [there is a curse on me; literally: 'sitting on me'] –, in a possessive syntagm – Telekes's *balvégzet átka* [curse of bad fate] –, in an adjectival phrase – *átkos gonoszság* [cursed vice] –, or in a terse, elliptic sentence – Eörsi 2's *átka rajtam* [its curse (is) on me].

Regarding the rich afterlife of the phrase, it features in Feró Nagy's rock opera (1986, p. 6) and, in an altered version, in Bereményi's play, spoken by the titular character: "Kizökkent az idő! Kárhozat van!" [The time is out of joint! It is damnation!] (1985, p. 47). In the more creative translation of Georgia Greist: "Time's out of joint. Temptation time" (1992, p. 88). In Sándor Szokolay's opera this Aranyean fragment is placed emphatically at the closure of the first act.

Amongst the translations of "**the rest is silence**" (Appendix One item 30) there are a couple of mistranslations, yet Arany's semantically correct and similarly terse sentence has become aphoristic. It appears in Maller's collection and on the *memoriter* list. "A többi, néma csend" [The rest, mute silence] is

reiterated by Eörsi 1 without the comma. This makes the sentence a mere subject-predicate structure, while Arany's comma is more for emphatic purpose, possibly recommending a pause to the actor. Zigány, Mészöly and Jánosházy borrowed this with a modification: they all dropped *néma* [mute], and reworked the punctuation in the sentence. *Néma csend* [mute silence] might have appeared as a tautology for them (since silence is conceived of as mute anyway), or there may have been a psychological blockage to repeating Arany's version in full. Alternatively, a wish to be different from the famous 'rendition' may have been the motive for omitting this adjective. As this example illustrates, the attitudes of mastery and discipleship mingle, even to the extent of internal contradiction within the translation strategy. Nádasdy's "és innentől a csend" [and from here: silence] is also markedly different from Arany. The same applies to Eörsi's euphonious second version: "nincs más, csak a csönd" [there's nothing but silence]. The mistranslations include Vajda's "A többiről hallgassunk" [Let's keep quiet about the rest]. This may be pertinent to the discussion between Hamlet and Horatio about passing down Hamlet's story, yet it is an infelicity, because this statement is understood in the context of the playtext as one coming from Hamlet *in limbo* as an expression of being prepared to enter the "undiscover'd country". Telekes's "Holtnak hallgatás" [Silence for the dead] is very aphoristic. Szabó T.'s "Csitt a többiről" might also fit into the final dialogue between Hamlet and his friend. In this version Hamlet perhaps hints to Horatio that only significant aspects of the story need to be retold. The sentence appears in Lencsés and Horváth's rock opera. Géza Bereményi reworks the aphorism famous in Arany's translation so that it expresses the ironic, nihilistic outlook of his play on the post-1956 generation: "A többi néma semmi" (1985, p. 69) [The rest is mute nothingness] ("The rest is silence") (1992, p. 141).

A particularly famous aphorism derives from Arany's take on **"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't"** (Appendix One item 10): "Őrült beszéd, őrült beszéd: de van benne rendszer" [Mad talk, mad talk: yet there is method/system in it]. Maller and the *memoriter* list quote Arany's full version, perhaps in order to be philologically impeccable. So does the Lencsés-Horváth rock opera, which borrows several lines from Arany's translation of the relevant scene. Probably for dramatic emphasis Arany duplicated the phrase *őrült beszéd* [mad talk]; however, the sentence has become an aphorism as "Őrült beszéd, de van benne rendszer" only. Feró Nagy reiterates the short, aphorismatic version in his rock opera (1986, p. 10). Ironically, it is a comment Polonius makes on fragments of the great soliloquy. Bereményi quotes a shortened version of the sentence famous from Arany: "Van benne rendszer" (1985, p. 68). Eörsi's dramaturgical version and Jánosházy's translation repeat the aphorismatic form of the sentence (with a colon). Mészöly adds *ez* [this] to the first clause, but the rest is the same as Arany's. Most other translations, including Vajda's, contain *őrültség*, a more literal translation (Zigány, Telekes, Szabó T., Eörsi 2 and Nádasdy). A crucial point is how 'method' is translated. Vajda has *rend* [order]; while after Arany all translators, except for Nádasdy, retained *rendszer* [method/system]. It is only the 'rebellious' translator, Nádasdy, who goes against this tradition; the other translations display an indebtedness to Arany, the master, but also prove how strong the aphorismatic quality of the sentence is. It is also revelative if the sentence is translated with a concessional clause (Vajda, Telekes, Szabó T., Nádasdy) – which corresponds to the original – or as a rhetorical anthithesis, lending itself to aphorismatisation.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Numerous other examples will be found in Appendices One and Two.

The following few quotations are semi-aphorisms or, in cases, ‘fake’ aphorisms even. They are not (necessarily) part of the Hungarian language; they cannot be called up from one’s memory as shortcuts for different sentiments. They are made into aphorisms by anthologists and/or educators. Arany’s version of “**Use every man after his desert ...**” (Appendix One item 21) is also quoted in Maller 1999, yet it is only known by heart in full by a select few: “Bánj mindenkivel érdeme szerint: melyikünk kerül el a mogyorópálcát? Bánjon velök saját embersége és méltósága szerint: minél kisebb az ő érdemök, annál nagyobb érdem a szívessége” [Treat everybody according to their merit: who will escape the hazelnut cane? Treat them according to their own humaneness and dignity: the smaller their merit the greater the merit of your favour]. The first clause is again slightly more likely to sound familiar. Blánár only gives this much as a maxim, and thus gives the impression as if Shakespeare had this moral instruction to hand down to us: ‘treat everybody according to their merit’ (Appendix Two item 25). The first word of the English sentence, ‘use’ has been put across with the verb *bánik* [treat, deal with] by every translator. This corresponds to the relevant meaning of *use* from Shakespeare’s time: ‘treat, deal with, behave towards (another) in a particular way’ (Onions 1986, p. 304). ‘Desert’ has been translated as *érdem* [merit] by all translators, and the Hungarian translations have an extra feature in comparison to the English ‘sources’, because ‘merit’ has also been translated as *érdem* by Vajda, Arany, Zigány, Szabó T., Eörsi 1, Eörsi 2 and Mészöly. One may see this repetition as emphatic rather than disturbing. Telekes uses the comparative grade of the adjective *értékes* [valuable] when translating ‘merit’, while Nádasdy’s option is *dicséretes* [praiseworthy]. The term ‘whipping’, which, in the ‘original’ signifies “statutory punishment for unlicensed players” (Jenkins in Shakespeare 1982, p. 268), conjectures similar historical

memories when translated into Hungarian. Both *mogyorópálca* [hazelnut cane] – used by Arany and retained in Eörsi 1 – and *megbotozás* [caning], used by Zigány and Telekes (the latter uses the form *botozatlan* [uncaned]) are reminiscent of punishment methods practiced in feudal times. Similarly appropriate is *korbács* [scourge/lash], chosen by the largest number of translators: Vajda, Szabó T., Eörsi 2, Mészöly, Nádasdy and Jánosházy. The tem ‘dignity’ has been translated as *méltóság* [dignity, self-esteem] by most translators. Szabó T. is the only one who translated it as *rang* [rank]. The only meaning Onions gives for this word is ‘dignitary’ (1986, p. 74), so Szabó T.’s interpretation of the word with regard to social stratification might not be so far-fetched. The noun ‘honour’ has been mediated with five different words in different translations. *Becsület* [honesty] appears in Vajda and Nádasdy; a related term, *becsületesség* [honesty, being honest] in Szabó T.; *tisztesség* [honesty] in Eörsi 2 and Jánosházy; *emberség* [humaneness] in Arany, Telekes, Eörsi 1 and Mészöly; *emberiség* [humanity, probably meaning ‘humaneness’] in Zigány. Onions gives three contemporary meanings for ‘bounty’, and these are all reflected by one or more translations (1986, p. 27). Nádasdy’s *nagyvonalúság* [liberality] is the closest to ‘liberality, munificence’; ‘act of generosity, a gift’ is conveyed by *szívesség* [favour] chosen by Arany, Zigány, Telekes and Mészöly, and retained in Eörsi 1; and ‘active benevolence, disposition to good’ is transmitted by *nagylelkűség* [generosity] in Szabó T. and Eörsi 2, and *jóság* [goodness] in Vajda and Jánosházy.⁹⁵ It is also important to note that *magázódás* is used in Arany, Zigány (with *ön*), Telekes (with *ön*), Eörsi 1 (with *az úr*), Eörsi 2 (with *maga*) and Nádasdy (with *maga*). *Tegeződés* (the *te* form) is used in Vajda, Szabó T. and Jánosházy. However, Eörsi 1 has a second person singular *te* form at the beginning of the sentence: *bánj*, with

⁹⁵ Zigány, Telekes and Eörsi 1 spell the word with a short *i*: *szivesség*.

a generic meaning (as in people treat, we treat, one treats, etc.).

It is hard to speculate why Maller wished to include Arany's 'rendition' of **"There needs no ghost ..."** (Appendix One item 20) in his collection: "Tudtunkra adni, nincs szükség, uram, Sírból jövő szellemre" [There's no need for a spirit from the grave to let us know this.]. This is one of the least justified 'purple passages' as it is not widely cited these days either in oral or written communication. Arany's translation did not influence successive translators, it has been kept with some modification by Eörsi in his dramaturgical version: "Ezt Tudtunkra adni nincs szükség, uram, Sírból jövő szellemre" [To let us know this there's no need, my lord, for a spirit from the grave]. The words chosen for 'ghost' deserve some attention. The options are *lélek* [soul] (Vajda), *szellem* [spirit] (Arany, Zigány, Jánosházy, Eörsi 1 and 2), *kísértet* [ghost] (Szabó T., Mészöly) and *árny* [shadow] (Telekes). Nádasdy omits the phrase. Vajda translates 'grave' as *más világ* [the other world]; the rest of the translators opt for *sír* [grave].⁹⁶

III: The translations of the great soliloquy

The following comparative examination of the translation of some famous phrases from the great soliloquy will exemplify the interdependence between translations, namely between the canonical and sacred one and those that seek recognition. The opening phrase of the very first sentence is translated in two main ways: with the infinitive, as in the original, and with nouns (the Hungarian for 'being' or

⁹⁶ Further examples of 'fake' aphorisms include Arany's formulation of **"Yea from the table of my memory I shall wipe all trivial fond records ..."** (Appendix One item 21), **"If it be now ..."** (Appendix One item 23), **"Rightly to be great ..."** (Appendix One 1 item 27), **"morn in russet mantle clad"** (Appendix One 1 item 18), **"There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will"** (Appendix One item 16), and **"Nature is fine in love ..."** (Appendix One item 29).

‘existence’).⁹⁷ Both choices have their advantages, and they set the scene for the soliloquy differently. The infinitive structure, *lenni vagy nem lenni* [to be or not to be], used by Döbrentei, Vajda, Arany, Szabó T., Eörsi 1, 2, Mészöly, Nádasdy and Jánosházy, is more rhetorical, more dynamic; it sounds like the beginning of a speech, and thus it may be more suitable for theatrical use. Kazinczy also used it in both his versions, which may have influenced some of the earlier translators. In a more philosophical vein, Zigány and Telekes translate the phrase as *lét vagy nem lét* [being or not being], truly illustrating the pondering nature of the soliloquy and presenting its speaker as a troubled intellectual, a musing *homo moralis*. Zigány focuses the attention on the choice between living and not living, when he makes Hamlet pose the rhetorical question: “Mi jobb: a lét, vagy nem lét?” [What is better: being, or not being?]. This is much more straightforward than the ‘source’. Telekes is less direct, though his version is probably inspired by Zigány: “Lét vagy nem lét: ez a kérdéses itt” [Being or not being: this is what is questionable here]. They may have been influenced by Arany’s first, more philosophical, translation of the sentence: “A lét vagy a nem-lét kérdése ez” [This is a question of being or not being/existence or non-existence]. Theatre practice preferred the version with the infinitive, which is now widely known as Arany’s ‘rendering’ of the line, although the nominal one is the ‘rendition’ that first appeared in print (cf. Mészöly 1998, p. 269).

The translation of the term **consummation** is also worthy of attention. In the original context of the soliloquy it is most likely to signify a ‘final end’ (Jenkins in Shakespeare 1982, p. 278), ‘death’ (Onions 1986, p. 57; Schmidt

⁹⁷ Please see Appendix Three The translations of the soliloquy (III/1; 56-87) will be quoted without the closure of the soliloquy: “Soft you now, / The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember’d” (III/1; 87-89). These sentences introduce the conversation with Ophelia, yet this section is not part of the speech as a famous fragment; it is not recited when the soliloquy is performed in itself, it is not rewritten normally in parodies, and so on.

1971, p. 240), yet it may also refer to a ‘satisfying climax’ (Jenkins in Shakespeare 1982, p. 278). None of the translations use the colloquial Hungarian for ‘death’ here (nor is the original so direct); some of them, however, use a synonym that may conjure up the notion of death. Döbrentei uses the word *kimulás* [extinction], which does not necessarily refer to humans; this is again a sign of objectivity: viewing the body as something transitory. Arany gives the word *vég* [end], which may metaphorically refer to death. Zigány, Telekes, Szabó T., Eörsi 1, Nádasdy and Jánosházy provide the same translation, which is most probably an Arany intertext in their work. Eörsi’s ‘independent’ translation has *pusztulás* [decay, putrefaction]. Similarly to the source, it captures the gradual degradation that may lead to that certain end. Interestingly, Vajda and Mészöly interpret the term as ‘goal’ or ‘aim’: *célhoz jutás* [reaching a goal] (Vajda) and *cél* [goal, aim] (Mészöly). This does not correspond to the original, yet, very much in the spirit of the soliloquy, it presents death as a distant (as unknown) destination to be achieved.

There are different interpretations of the word **conscience** by the translators. Vajda and Nádasdy connect it to the mechanism of self-judgement and qualm, and use the word *lelkiismeret* [conscience, qualm, small still voice]. Vajda gives the same word with a hyphen: *lelki-ismeret*. Most of the translators, however, take the word as denoting self-awareness, and translate it as *öntudat* (Arany, Szabó T., Jánosházy and Eörsi 1, 2), *tudat* (Mészöly), while Zigány modifies it by *töprengés* [pondering], and Telekes uses the same term, probably borrowing it straight from Zigány. Döbrentei’s phrase *lelki érzet* [soul-feeling] is no longer in use; it is slightly unclear.

The famous Hungarian counterpart to Shakespeare’s **rub** is widely known to be derived from Arany’s translation. He may have borrowed *bökkenő* – a

playful noun meaning ‘hindrance’, ‘blockage’ or ‘catch’ – from Döbrentei. This was also used by Zigány, Telekes, Szabó T., Mészöly and Jánosházy. Eörsi kept it in his dramaturgical version. In his second version he paraphrases it using a whole close: *itt akad el az ész* [this is where the mind is hindered/gets stuck]. Kállay (2000, p. 13) finds this solution slightly conversational (which is not necessarily a value judgement). Nádasdy goes for the more general and colloquial *baj* [trouble, problem]. None of the terms used originates from any jargon, as opposed to *rub*, which derives from the terminology of bowls.

A most revelatory case is the translation of the word **country** and its attribute, **undiscover’d**. Döbrentei and Vajda translate it as *hon* (or in Döbrentei: *honny*), to which the closest word in English would be ‘homeland’, and its adjective is *ismeretlen* [unknown, unfamiliar] and *titokban rémlő* [secretly emerging] in Döbrentei. It is not accidental that in a period when nation-building is so crucial, and the institution of the national theatre is being solidified, such a patriotic, ideologically marked term is used. A few decades later Arany uses the word *tartomány* [province], which refers to a division of a country rather than a whole country, suggesting perhaps a segment or aspect of existence. One can only speculate about this choice. It is also possible that *ország*, *haza* or *hon* would have made the soliloquy an overtly politicising one at the time. Yet, he selected a word that – in a politically orientated reading – may reflect on the current state of affairs in Hungary: being part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in an ambivalent pact of compromise (ratified in 1867). The word *tartomány* was extensively ‘borrowed’ later by other translators: Zigány, Szabó T., Mészöly and Jánosházy. Béla Telekes decides upon *táj* [landscape, countryside], which is rather apolitical. Instead of inscribing the soliloquy with Hungarian history, like a few other versions do, Telekes’s arty choice focuses on a more imaginary location. Both

Eörsi's texts apply the word *ország*, the contemporary Hungarian word for 'country' as in a political entity (and thus, a rather neutral word in terms of style). Nádasdy makes the same choice; this would, in the case of both translators, mean a careful following of the original. However, this is the current meaning of the word *country*, which, in Shakespeare's time it also meant 'district, region' (cf. Onions 1986, p. 61), which seems to be reiterated in Arany's version. The meaning 'a tract of land' and 'the rural parts of a territory' (cf. Schmidt 1971, p. 252) are apparent in Arany's and Telekes's choices. However, the term also meant 'the whole territory of a state' and 'the land of nativity' (Schmidt 1971, p. 252). This philologically justifies the relevance of *ország* and *hon* – all these used in a metaphorical sense. Arany utilises the phrase *nem ismert* [not known] to describe the province; this is retained by Szabó T.'s prose translation only; probably because the two-word structure may be a bit awkward, and not so poetic. *Ismeretlen* [unknown, unfamiliar] appears in Zigány, Telekes, Nádasdy and Jánosházy after Vajda. This is a generalising translation as opposed to the more specific term 'undiscover'd'. It is only Eörsi who gives its 'literal' Hungarian translation: *fel nem fedezett* (in his first version, *fel-nem-fedezett*). Mészöly uses the slightly literary and cryptic *fölfedetlen* [not-uncovered].

The **traveller** who does not return from this ominous country is a related issue. Vajda uses the Hungarian for 'pilgrim' – *zarándok* - to translate this word, which adds more than a religious tone to his text: the word also conjures up the literary commonplace (of Christian origin) of life as a pilgrimage. Arany's *utazó* [traveller] was later borrowed by Szabó T., Mészöly, Eörsi (in both his versions) and Jánosházy. Kazinczy used the same word in both his versions; it is unclear whether Arany was familiar with these. Zigány, and probably inspired by him, Telekes goes for *utas* [passenger], and this is also Nádasdy's solution. However, it

appears as early as in Döbrentei's translation. In his day this word could have had a more everyday and down-to-earth ring to it than *utazó*, which is by now certainly laden with connotations. Nevertheless, the word will have an intertextual surplus to very educated receivers from Antal Szerb's 1937 novel, *Utas és holdvilág*.⁹⁸ The novel, ironically, tackles a quest for identity, and ponders on the irony and futility of scholarship (cf. Czigány 1984, p. 439).

The phrase in which the word *traveller* appears is challenged by the Hungarian translations as they seem to take a stance on whether travellers do not return from this country as a rule, or there has been no precedence for such a return. Three translators make Hamlet say that travellers do not return – in simple present: Arany, Eörsi (in both versions) and Szabó T. The rest of the translations – Döbrentei's, Zsigány's, Telekes's, Mészöly's and Nádasdy's – emphasise that such a return has not taken place so far. (Thus, these can be translated into English in the present perfect tense.) Döbrentei and Zsigány emphasise that not a single passenger has ever returned from this province. A possible explanation for 'leaving the door open' may be the influence of the grand narrative of Christianity, traits of which often prevail irrespective of the individual translator's relation to religious belief.

For the word **action** there are only two words introduced in the translations. The word *tett* appears first in Döbrentei, then in Vajda, and it subsequently became famous from Arany's translation, having been reiterated in Zsigány, Telekes, Szabó T., both versions by Eörsi as well as in Mészöly. Nádasdy, the most recent translator takes the courage to deviate from the well-known term and use *cselekvés*, a contemporary word for 'action'. This is not only very salutable because it proves that translation is indeed interpretation and

⁹⁸ The novel has appeared in English translation: *Journey by Moonlight*, translated by Len Rix (2002). The 'literal' translation of the title would be [Traveller and Moonlight].

negotiation, but also because the word *tett* today means ‘deed’. It generally refers to an act that is important from a certain perspective or is in the spotlight for some reason (for instance, it can be used in objective description of crimes). Jánosházy does not include this element in the translation, he makes the clause refer to the venture mentioned in the previous clause: “Sok nagyszerű, lelkes vállalkozás / Letért útjáról e kétely miatt, / S nem érdemes nevére sem” [Many great, eager ventures got off their way due to this doubt, and they don’t even deserve their names].

IV: Creative sites of the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet*

Even though the detailed discussion of *Hamlet* rewrites has been allocated to Part Three of this thesis, it is necessary that we have some understanding here of the intertextual afterlife of *Hamlet* from the perspective of reworked fragments. This section intends to shed some light on the almost independent afterlife of a selection of these segments. Most of the examples to be listed or examined here will underline the ‘sacredness’ of Shakespeare, and many of them will also confirm the sacredness of Arany’s translation. These fragments are part of a cultural heritage, thus are often used for political purposes, or rewritten in the interest of creative topicalisation. Pierre Nora points out that literature is one of memory’s forms of legitimacy (1996, p. 20). Without doubt theatre can also be perceived as a site where memory is revisited and thus, constructed. It is impossible to list the numerous examples of such phrases being reworked in other literary texts whether in an altered or an unaltered form. Even before modernism – a trend which draws on the past as material to be consulted and debated within the literary work – the quotation of famous works and passages was widely used due to the strong tradition of rhetoric in Europe, which encouraged the invocation of

authority when it came to proving an important argument. Thus, there are innumerable Shakespearean occurrences in nineteenth- as well as twentieth-century literature.⁹⁹

It is in itself a marker of the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet* that certain writers translated only representative parts of the play. The most widely translated and otherwise reworked passage is the great soliloquy. There certainly are more versions of the great soliloquy in Hungarian than full translations of the playtext. Gábor Döbrentei, a prominent figure of the Hungarian Enlightenment, prepared a translation of Hamlet's great soliloquy, which was published in the literary periodical *Szépliteratúrai Ajándék* [A Belletristic Gift] in 1821 (see Appendix Three). Assuming from Kazinczy's correspondence, Dezső Rexa (1916) claims that János Kótsi Patkó, an actor from the Transylvanian cultural centre Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), might have also translated the great soliloquy from *Hamlet* in the early-nineteenth century. This is, however, not extant.

Experts of Shakespeare on opera have noted that Shakespeare composed "144 soliloquies alone in the fifteen plays he wrote for the Globe Theatre, an average of almost ten per play" (Schmidgall 1990, p. 66). Shakespeare is reputed to have composed excellent 'raw material' for arias, and this material mainly consists of the soliloquies. In this respect the genre of the opera has also contributed to the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet*.

In theatre practice changing the place of the great soliloquy in the play (by

⁹⁹ The great soliloquy has also enjoyed a great deal of critical attention, the examination of which is not possible within the confines of this thesis. Bernát Alexander carried out a close reading of this part of the play in his book *Shakespeare Hamletje* [Shakespeare's *Hamlet*]. For illustration's sake, here is the set of subtitles dividing his discussion: "Lenni vagy nem lenni. Mily lelki állapotban mondja Hamlet ezt a monológot. A menedéke: a gondolkodás. Az öngyilkosság gondolata. A monológ legjellemzőbb része: a fájdalom végnélkülisége. A monológ különböző felfogása. Az ellentmondás. A végsorok." [To be or not to be. In what state of mind does Hamlet speak this soliloquy? His menace is thinking. The idea of suicide. The most characteristic part of the soliloquy is the endlessness of pain. Different views on the soliloquy. The contradiction. The closing lines.] (1902, pp. 79-80)

interfering with the sequence of scenes) always divides the critics. Whether this ‘sacred’ part of the play can be moved around stirs considerable debate. In his review of a 1940 performance with the famous actor Tivadar Uray, the literary historian and writer Marcell Benedek (1940) raises his voice against the removal of the soliloquy from its usual position to the beginning of the play. Before seeing the performance, just formulating his opinion on the basis of the reviews, Benedek thought this decision by the director can be justified. Having seen the production he changed his mind and said that the soliloquy lost its power when spoken elsewhere in the play. It is difficult to tell retrospectively how coherent the performance was with the soliloquy spoken elsewhere than its usual place, but from a postmodernist perspective it can be seen as a clever trick to interrogate receivers’ expectations from the text and its possibilities of staging, and thus, potentially challenge their reading of the written text as well, alongside with problematising the issue of staging a classic. Such a potentially sacrilegious act may express the *ars poetica* of the adapter. Benedek’s argument shows that he thought of the soliloquy as an integral part of the playtext, but his attitude might equally be linked to the fetishisation of the ideologically dominant parts of the text. Perhaps that is why he felt this part belonged there and nowhere else. The theatre critic Anikó László also elaborates on a performance which split the great soliloquy. The 1955 performance had Hamlet complete the speech in the graveyard scene, looking at the skull. In 1993 in Pécs the director Sándor Sík also moved the great soliloquy from its place. Omitting the soliloquy can even be scandalous. Celestino Coronado’s ‘naked *Hamlet*’ (1977), which was reported as the first film version which dropped the great soliloquy, challenged the critics, many of whom thought the film clearly lacked an essential part.

It is of great importance how, in what position, the great soliloquy is spoken on the stage. In the 1976 Debrecen *Hamlet* György Cserhalmi, the actor in the titular role, delivered the soliloquy hanging upside down, giving the viewer literally a different stance on the soliloquy's issues. Other critics also noted that Cserhalmi's dexterous, acrobatic and charismatic performance turned the production into somewhat of a one-man-show. The reviewer István Vajda (1956) considers the staging of the soliloquy the only strikingly erratic aspect of the 1956 Debrecen production, and a sensational, attention-seeking device. In the consciousness-raising *Hamlet* of 1983/84 in Győr, Gábor Máthé spoke the soliloquy – in Arany's words adjusted by Eörsi – in a lying position. The whole performance was centred on Hamlet being always sleepy, finding sleep a solace from the demotivating environment of the corrupt consumer society surrounding him. The performance took place during the period of the so-called goulash communism. In a recent performance in Temesvár (Transylvania), where the setting evokes a railway station, the Hamlet-actor (Attila Balázs) speaks the soliloquy – in Eörsi's wording – moving on a red, hand-driven locomotive. One of the reviewers notes that the actor delivered the speech awkwardly, at an unnatural pitch, with bad prosody, and was authentic for a few moments only (Hegyi 2003).

This is a fragment of the play which gets very frequently adjusted or rewritten whether as part of the play or separately, and also recontextualised in a production. Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000) features the eponymous character delivering the famous lines in the aisles of a Blockbuster video store. By relocating it in what can be deemed as a rather lowbrow environment, the film trivialises and, at the same time, popularises the speech.

There does not need to be a change in the *mise-en-abyme* – the shifting or splitting of the soliloquy – for its appearance to be topical. Circumstances may

render the soliloquy pertinent to the moment. The following anecdote illustrates the always topical (as always topicalised) nature of the “To be or not to be” soliloquy. The first night of *Hamlet* at Várszínház of the National Theatre of Budapest) in 1994 was interrupted by a bomb alarm. This was seen by many as a wilful act of bardicide, even though it might have been meant as a tongue-in-cheek and intrusive take on a symbol of the cultural establishment. Sándor Szakácsi, who did Hamlet, later commented that he would have felt like including this unexpected event in the wording of the great soliloquy:

[M]ert ki viselné a kor gúny-csapásait, zsarnok bosszúját, gőgös ember dölyfét, utált szerelme kínját, pör halasztást, a hivatalnak packázásait – *bombariadót*. S mind a *rengést*, mellyel méltatlanok bántalmazzák a tűró érdemet...

[For who would bear the derision-blows of the age, the revenge of the tyrant, the haughtiness of the supercilious, the pain of hated love, the delay of trial, the insolence of office – bomb alarm. And all the shaking with which the unworthy hurt the tolerant merit....] (Anon. 1994b, my emphases)

Even though the management of the theatre decided not to take the alarm seriously, the police did stop the performance and evacuated the building. The performance did not proceed further than the ghost’s first appearance, so Szakácsi did not have a chance to update the soliloquy onstage. Although this is a *bon mot* from a brief interview, it serves as an example of taking the text as ‘raw material’, making it accessible and adjusting it to the moment. In the very same interview Szakácsi talks of the importance of the sentence including “To be or not to be” soliloquy in the play – as if it were an encapsulation of a truth, or the gist of the play:

A „Lenni vagy nem lenni”-t a darabban bárhol el lehet mondani. És ha nem mondod el, nem hiányzik mégsem. Olyan fantasztikusan jó mondat, hogy bárhol felütheti a fejét. Ha bármilyen pódiumon kiáll egy ember és elmondja egymás után háromszor más-más értelmezésben ezt az egyetlen mondatot, létrejöhet a Hamlet. Mert a Hamlet ebben a néhány szóban is benne van.

[“To be or not to be” can be spoken at any time in the play. And it is not missing, even if it is not spoken. It is such a fantastic sentence that it can

crop up anywhere. If anyone stands up on any podium and says this single sentence three times after one another in different interpretations, *Hamlet* may come into being. For *Hamlet* is there in these few words.] (Anon. 1994b)

As a *pars pro toto* this section seems to have the potential to carry the essence of the whole play, and the fact that the great soliloquy seems to be unavoidably there – even when it is literally absent – further emphasises the mysterious sacredness of the text, beside exemplifying a metonymic afterlife of the play in cultural memory. This can be linked to what is argued about Nádasdy's very carefully worded 'alterations', which facilitate the presence of Arany's sacred text due to the reader's or viewer's immediate association with the aphoristic sentences. When he daringly gives versions that are strikingly different from Arany's, Nádasdy paradoxically reinforces the canonisation of Arany's translation as the 2000 translation outlines an intertextual context in which to be received.

A seventy-minute monodrama based on *Hamlet* toured around Hungary and featured as the first item at the Játékszín Playhouse in 1978 (cf. T. A. 1979). The actor, director and dramaturg of the production was András Kozák. The musical accompaniment was provided by the Kaláka group, a band experienced in setting poetry to music. This show is an illustrative example of a performance centred on translation-based collective memory. The performance was chiefly based on the soliloquies, although some snippets of dialogue were also included in the script. Some characters were only represented by musical tones or instruments, a recorder standing for Ophelia, for instance (cf. B. 1978 and Bors 1978). In the vein of Grotowski's poor theatre, the setting was reduced to a minimum, namely to a chair (cf. T. A. 1979), for this intersemiotic translation of *Hamlet*. According to the reviewer Katalin Szikora (1978), this was a 'concert *Hamlet*'. *Hamlet* came across to some of the critics as a passionless and

withdrawn monologuing figure, talking to himself (Vértessy 1978). His tragic fall is a result of an attempt to fight single-handed (Szikora 1978).

The mixed responses to this one-man show shed light on how well some of the soliloquies worked in this unusual context. László Bernáth (1978) claims this specifically about the great soliloquy. Ny. A. (1978), the reviewer of *Kritika* [Reviews] mentions the sentences from *Hamlet* that have become quotations or ‘purple passages’, noting that these fragments do not suffice to make the show into a ‘proper’ performance of *Hamlet* (that is suitable for secondary school students who have not seen the play in the theatre yet). Ny. A. does not think the fragments can substitute for the whole, they just give a vague impression of it. Nevertheless, there is at least one famous precedent to such an enterprise: John Gielgud’s one-man show based on *The Ages of Man*, a sequence of Shakespearean ‘gems’ carefully edited by George Reyland to follow the life of a human being from childhood to old age.¹⁰⁰

In the following example Arany’s *Hamlet* and its fragments not only serve as a playscript for the stage but as one for life (and death), too. Seeing *Hamlet* as a handbook of aphorisms is also present in the fictionalisation of the life of the gifted young director István Horváth. As Laurie E. Osborne (1999, pp. 56-60) persuasively argues, Shakespearean citation and patterns are particularly significant in the so-called actress-novels; here, however, it is a male director whose life is inscribed with a Shakespeare play, namely *Hamlet*. Horváth was a university student in Szeged during WW2, where in April 1941 he directed *Hamlet* with fellow-students as a means of rejecting the atrocities of the war. However, the play in his and his amateur company’s hands was far more than a vehicle of ideologies; the production was also praised for its aesthetic power.

¹⁰⁰ Sándor Maller saw the production in Paris (cf. Maller 1999, unpaginated foreword).

According to János Erdődy's fictional account of the performance (which he based on writing by Horváth), there was tremendous applause after the great soliloquy that required a pause of several minutes during the course of the performance. This suggests again that this segment of the play is widely thought to contain the essence of the whole.

A few months after his tremendously successful *Hamlet*, Horváth committed suicide to avoid being subjected to the laws introduced against the Jews. The story is rendered even more tragic by the fact that he died together with his girlfriend, Kata Tóth, who had played Gertrude in their performance of *Hamlet*. His life and work became a myth, and was reworked both in a play and in a novel. The former is György Somlyó's *Miért hal meg az ember?* [Why does man die?], illustrating in itself the vigorous afterlife of an aphorism of a Shakespearean-Aranyean origin. The other work about Horváth is János Erdődy's *Jó éjt, királyfi* [Good night, prince]. In his fictionalisation of Horváth's life and work Erdődy emphasises how much Horváth relied on Arany's translation of *Hamlet* for his playscript, and how satisfied he was with a number of Arany's choices which turned out to herald the anxieties of the day. Erdődy's novel pays a wholehearted tribute to Arany's translation. Erdődy's retrospective criticism of the fascist terror in Hungary lurks behind the lines of the two quotations below. In a very Kottian manner, Shakespeare's and Arany's text is viewed as expressing the horror of events that came much after the times when the texts were written. In fact, Erdődy's reading seems to view the performance in more political terms than it may have been seen at the time. Horváth, for instance, completely omitted the part of Fortinbras, which is a role frequently central to political rereadings. The following passage paraphrases and amends Hamlet's famous summation of the task of an actor:

És nemcsak a színjátéknak célja, hogy tükröt tartson mintegy a természetnek, és felmutassa maga az idő, a század testének tulajdon alakját és lenyomatát ... ahogy az Arany-szöveg mondja. Az emberi beszédnek is célja és rendeltetése ez. Legalábbis: olykor. Ha lehet, ahol lehet, és addig. [It is not only the aim of acting to hold up a mirror to nature, and show the figure and mark of time itself, the figure and mark of the body of the century... as Arany's text puts it. This is also the aim and mission of human speech. At least at times. If possible, where it is possible, and as long as it is possible.] (1984, p. 63)

Here is a section that clearly topicalises Arany's translation, and also takes sides with it as opposed to a previous translation, namely Vajda's, whose name is not even mentioned. Nevertheless, "Valami bűzlik Dániában" [Something stinks in Denmark] is associated with Péter Vajda, even if philologically erratically:

'Rohadt az államgépben valami.' Milyen jó, hogy Arany János nem tartotta meg az előtte volt fordító versét: 'Valami bűzlik Dániában.' Az a mondat pontosabban követte a shakespeare-i mondatot, de túlságosan kötődött a színpadi országhoz. Az Arany-sor általános érvénnyel mondja ki az igazságot. Ökölcsapás az arcba, mert világosan beszél: 'Rólad szól a mese.' Rólunk. Valami rohadt nemcsak a színdarab Dániájában, de Budapesten is.

['Something is rotten in the state machine.' How great it is that János Arany didn't retain the previous translator's verse: 'Something stinks in Denmark.' That sentence followed the Shakespearean sentence closer, but it was much too associated with the country on stage. Arany's line proclaims the truth with a general appeal. It is a punch in the face because it speaks clearly: 'The story is about you.' About us. Something is rotten not only in the play's Denmark but in Budapest too.] (1984, p. 111)

Erdődy imagines a Horváth who lived Shakespeare's *Hamlet* – through Arany. In Erdődy's retelling of Horváth's life story, the young intellectual viewed *Hamlet* as a fountain of wisdom. As the narration goes, "Kapkodó agya a már szinte magán-Bibliává lett Hamletben keresgélt" [His restless brain was fumbling in *Hamlet*, which had almost become his personal Bible.] (1984, p. 203). There is a striking parallel with Gábor Tárnok, a fictitious character (metaphorically speaking) living in *Hamlet* to be described in Part Three. The novelist presents Horváth as contemplating suicide in a Budapest cafe with the aid of the great soliloquy.

The present author's initial assumption was that the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet* in Hungarian is confined to Arany's text, with very few earlier exceptions (such as Csokonai's poem). Nevertheless, the research process has shown that there are numerous examples of rewriting certain parts, aspects, motifs of *Hamlet* from the time when Kazinczy's and Vajda's versions were being staged (and in Kazinczy's case, read).¹⁰¹ This is, on one level, perfectly logical, since it was a time when Hungarian literature was looking for models, patterns, and it appears that *Hamlet* and certain aspects of it – especially the great soliloquy, the apparition of the ghost, Hamlet's pretended madness and Ophelia's actual madness, and the gravediggers' scene – found their way into 'original' literature, mainly playwriting. Besides, the device of the soliloquy lent itself very well to romantic theatre. However, it is typical of the Arany cult that Császár quotes Arany even when comparing these rewrites of the great soliloquy to 'Shakespearean' standards.

Several plays (for example, the 1813 *Aubigny* and the previously mentioned *Bánk bán*) by József Katona are reminiscent of *Hamlet*. In *Luca széke* [Luca's Chair] (1812), Lázár, a minor character, has the suspicion that his mother was killed by his father, and he considers the situation in a soliloquy presented in a crypt beside his mother's coffin (cf. Császár 1917, pp. 74-76). In Part I of Katona's *Ziska* (1813) the chief protagonist shies away from action – which coincides with a stereotypical reading of Hamlet, the character –, and in a speech (delivered in Act I Scene 3) resembling Hamlet's second soliloquy (II/2; 544-601) he blames himself harshly for this lack of action, like Hamlet.

The notable mathematician Farkas Bolyai's 1818 five-act play, *A párisi per* [The Parisian Trial], has a comic take on the soliloquy. In 1917 Elemér

¹⁰¹ Especially for the early examples of reworking the soliloquy the present author is very indebted to Császár's (1917) and Riedl's (1916) work.

Császár found it an audacious, almost sinful act (“szinte bűnös vállalkozás”, p. 59) that Bolyai applied the rhetorical pattern of the speech to the subject of marriage. Császár calls the previous reworkings respectful (*tiszteletreméltó*) as opposed to this cheeky one. He was appalled by this degradation, demotisation of this – in his way of thinking, arguably – sacred text. Here one encounters another taboo: the taboo based on the mighty, tragic character of the soliloquy:

A To be or not to be-t parodistikusan egy komoly dráma hangulatának elrontására használni s így üres lélektelen czifrasággá súlyeszteni valóban megbocsáthatatlan bűn; e mellett eltörpül az, hogy az átírt monologból hiányzik minden szellem és ízlés.

[It is an unforgiveable sin, indeed, to use “To be or not to be” parodistically in order to ruin the atmosphere of a serious play and, thus, degrade it as soulless decoration. Compared to this it is rather negligible that the rewritten soliloquy lacks all spirit and taste.] (Császár 1917, p. 60)

One would argue that trivialising is not necessarily an attack on the play, on the ‘original’. Parody, apart from being a more light-hearted genre, also draws attention to the ‘source’; it may contribute to the (re)canonisation and reinterpretation of the ‘source’ (besides sometimes being a noteworthy text in its own right, like Karinthy’s parodies). Császár accepts parodies which are parodies as such rather than parts of a play because they are written as a parody, and do not mislead the reader. “Irodalmi értékük nincs, noha a paródia nem egészen jogosulatlan műfaj” [They (parodies) don’t have any literary value, though parody is not an entirely unjustifiable genre] (Császár 1917, p. 61). This is reputed to be the first parody of Shakespeare in Hungarian, in which Shakespeare’s famous line (probably via Kazinczy’s translation) is turned into “megházasodni, vagy meg nem házasodni” [to marry or not to marry],

Gondolatról-gondolatra haladva, el nem ejtve, de annál inkább eltorzítva Shakespeare gyöngysorának minden szemét, átírja az egész monológot – a házasságra.

[Proceeding from thought to thought, not dropping but disfiguring Shakespeare’s every gem, adapts the whole soliloquy – to marriage.] (Császár 1909, p. 59)

In Sándor Kisfaludy's play *Kún László* (1816-1820) when old Zongor's daughter is raped, he ponders on what action to take in the form of a soliloquy. This strikingly recalls Hamlet's contemplation especially – in its structuring and because of the motif of killing by a stab –, yet it has far less philosophical implications. Nevertheless – if seen in the context of the plot –, Zongor comes across as more of a Polonius character, who – here, absolutely justifiably – worries about his daughter's chastity. The following extract from his soliloquy in Act III Scene 7 rings Hamletian bells:

Kérdés csak az lehet; ha én-e? vagy
 Leányom? – Addig vonnyam-e –
 Lealázva oktalan barom sorsára itt
 Ínségem – e' szekéren – így csikorogva, míg
 Örökre meg nem süllyedek? –
 Vagy egy merész döféssel én
 Magamat kimentsem? – Vagy örök keservitől
 Boldogtalan leányomat?
 [The question can only be: me or my daughter?
 Shall I pull my destitution, despised as an idle beast
 On this cart here, creaking thus, until I sink for good?
 Or should I excuse myself with a courageous stab?
 Or my hapless daughter from her eternal sorrow?] (Császár 1917, p. 54)

Antal Szathmáry Király: *Az oltovány vagy A' viszont találkozás* [The Shoot or The Re-encounter] (1825), a sentimental play, generically linked to the eighteenth-century *Rührstück*, inserts a rewritten version of the great soliloquy (in Act IV Scene 1), though, as Császár argues, it is not very well incorporated into the plot, it does not sound authentic from the speaker of the soliloquy in this play (1917, p. 57). Perhaps the literary historian has this impression also because the soliloquy is spoken by a female character here. She is a countess who disappears and turns up in the guise of a pilgrim who meditates about life and death, reiterating some of Hamlet's ideas from the soliloquy. Pál Fogarasi Nagy's 1827 romantic play *Véres örökség* [Inheritance by Blood] features a count

contemplating suicide in a soliloquy (Act II Scene 4), concluding the speech by throwing away the dagger histrionically.

There are echoes of the great soliloquy in Mihály Vörösmarty's *Csongor és Tünde* [Csongor and Tünde] (1830) – translated under the title *The Quest* into English –, in the scholar's monologue in Act V Scene 2, where he meets Csongor for the second time. The scholar is one of the three travellers – beside the merchant and the prince – that Csongor, the quester-protagonist, encounters on his journey. Peter Zollman's translation will be quoted to illustrate the scholar's lamentation of transitoriness and – at least in the English translation – the possibility of suicide in a sophisticated philosophical manner:

I don't know how to live,
but would I die to know?
Consider now this timeless mystery.
The helpless bungler finds it hard to live,
but life, if endless, is a deadly burden.
Which is the harsher destiny, you ask.
The bungler's? Missing even his demise?
But that's the mark of immortality!
Does competence assume a will to live?
If not, does it deny the right to dying?
I didn't want to be, yet here am I,
now, desperate to live, I'm bound to die.
And still, when I behold my paltriness
I want to die but don't know how to try. (Vörösmarty 1996, p. 135)

It needs pointing out that the 'original' does not mention attempting suicide, which is the translator's 'intervention' (in the spirit of the 'original'): "Tán úgy kívánnám, s meg nem halhatok!" [Methinks, I would desire it so much, but I cannot die!] (Vörösmarty 1996, p. 134). Also, the first two lines translated in a format reminiscent of the beginning of the great soliloquy, Vörösmarty's text does not have such a sharp juxtaposition of the two possibilities.

In János Garay's play *Ország Ilona* (1837) the quick-tampered, sanguinic Perényi muses in Hamlet's manner in Act II Scene 7:

Igy tesz belőlünk sanda aggalom

Hitvány pulyákat! ráhazudja a
 Tökéleteknek bátor homlokára
 A lelkiismeret sápadt színét,
 S a félelem levén báb asszonyuk,
 Vagy nem születnek, vagy csonkulva jönnek
 Világra szándokink.
 [This is how cockeyed concern
 Makes us into paltry kids!
 It lies upon¹⁰² the brave forehead of the perfect
 The pale colour of conscience,
 And our resolutions are either unborn or come to this life distorted,
 Fear being their midwife.] (Császár 1917, pp. 55-56)

Károly Obernyik's 1843 tragedy entitled *Messiás* [Messiah], the work of a budding playwright, features a repenting Judas, who also has reflections on death in a Hamletian manner as he struggles with qualm in his "élni vagy halni" [to live or to die] soliloquy (Act V Scene 8). However, as Császár emphasises, Obernyik portrays a man being preoccupied with his very own fate, while Shakespeare's pensive hero thinks in a universal scope (1917, pp. 58-59).

Géza Juhász and Miklós Tóth-Máthé also composed their own mock "To be or not to be" soliloquies (to be discussed in Part Three Chapter Two.) Sándor Szentkúti in 1817 translated an English parody of the great soliloquy into Hungarian and published it in *Erdélyi Muzeum* under the title "Hamlet monológjának paródiája (Jago szerint Anglusból)" [A Parody of Hamlet's soliloquy (From English after Jago)]. The author of the original is supposed to be the same Richard Jago (1715-1781) who composed a song for Garrick's Stratford Jubilee (see Appendix Four). A similar mock-soliloquy to the one in *Erdélyi Muzeum*, found among Berlioz's miscellaneous essays, was republished in *Shakespeare and Opera* (see Appendix Four). Another specimen of the modern-day rewriting of the great soliloquy was penned by Prince Charles, in his speech given at the presentation of the Thomas Cranmer Schools Prize (December 1989; see Appendix Four). These two examples outside Hungarian culture (and one

¹⁰² It is unusual usage even in Hungarian.

which is a Hungarian translation of a parody written in English) highlight the fact that it is not unique to Hungarian culture to have rewrites, even impertinent ones, of Shakespearean fragments such as the great soliloquy.

PART TWO

Intersemiotic Translation: A Case Study of the 2003 Pécs Production

“Listeners of the day before yesterday as well as of the day after tomorrow are always among those to whom one speaks as a contemporary.”
(Gadamer 1975, p. 356.)

“All performance is interpretation. All interpretation is highlighting.”
(Gadamer 1975, p. 362)

Performance as translation

With reference to the connection between the stage and translation, there are two major critical approaches. On one hand, there is a tendency to envisage performance itself as a translation from page to stage and, on the other, there is a considerable body of critical writing concerning the different issues of translating plays specifically for theatrical usage. The first approach, pioneered by Reba Gostand, Erika Fischer-Lichte and others, fits in with Jakobson’s notion of *intersemiotic translation* (transfer from one semiotic system to another), while the second, adopted by the majority of those working in the field, including the collection of essays *Moving Target* (2000), edited by Carole-Anne Upton, takes the term *translation* in a more literal sense, and focuses on a special area of translation practice, namely translation done for the theatre, which is often intertwined with adaptation practice.

There are, of course, intermediary approaches combining the two stances. Patrice Pavis, for example, as will be seen later, discusses a broad concept of translation for the theatre, including interlingual translation (what the word translation usually denotes in common usage) as well as the further stages leading up to a performance, such as the dramaturgy, *mise-en-scène*, the inclusion of other

semiotic systems, and so on. Thus, he clearly sees the performance itself as part or, perhaps, even the chief and final stage of the performance translation process. This part of the thesis will mainly focus on the aspect of performance as translation with the aid of the Pécs staging of *Hamlet* (opened 24 January 2003), based on Ádám Nádasdy's translation.

In her article entitled “Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication: Drama as Translation”, Reba Gostand, an expert on Australian drama, investigates different aspects of transfer within the realm of theatre, employing the trope of translation in order to describe them:

Drama, as an art-form, is a constant process of translation: from original concept to script (when there is one), to producer/director's interpretation, to contribution by designer and actor/actress, to visual and/or aural images to audience response... these are only the most obvious stages (no pun intended) in the process. At every stage there may be a number of subsidiary processes of translation at work. (1980, p. 1)

Her metaphoric scope is wide enough to include an aspect of translation in the sense of translating life experiences, events, ideas, feelings into theatre: “From life it becomes theatre, theatrical, something observed as well as experienced, a product of the imagination, a creation” (1980, p. 1). This dovetails with Jiří Levý's view that “it is not objective reality that penetrates the work of art, but the author's interpretation of reality” (1969 cited Pavis 1989, p. 139). This stance also overlaps with the widespread usage of translation as a metaphor for creative writing, with a special emphasis on postcolonial writing and *écriture féminine*. Octavio Paz even envisages translation as a metaphor for language:

Each text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase.
(Paz 1992 cited Bassnett and Trivedi 1999, p. 3)

Irrespective of whether the author, director, or other theatre-maker arranges these elements in a realistic/naturalistic or rather an expressionistic, surrealistic (and so on) style, according to Gostand, this is also a translation phenomenon. So is the choice of genre – among which she enlists tragedy, comedy, satire, farce, romance, allegory, morality and fantasy (1980, p. 4). The actor's education and sensitiveness comprise a further level of translation. "The kind and degree of training, and the sophistication, an actor brings to his art are further filters of the script performed" (1980, pp. 7-8). Using Adolphe Appia's classification of plastic elements in scenic design (which contains perpendicular painted scenery, horizontal floor, moving actor and lighted space), she presents the non-verbal visual constituents of a production as a kind of translation, too (1980, p. 8).

She elaborates this view in these terms:

The medium chosen for the production, the mode and style of the production, even the physical setting (amphitheatre, circus ring, opera house, street theatre, intimate theatre, or lounge room with solitary viewer in front of the television set) and the audience for whom the production is intended – all these are inter-related aspects of the translation process, and it is not easy to speak of any one of them separately, so great is their interdependence. Within each medium, there are yet further processes of translation involved in the choice and arrangement of the verbal and non-verbal elements of theatre – the music (and all the vocal, mechanical, electrical or natural sound effects), the silences, the action, movement or immobility (including gesture, stage-business, mime, dance), the characterisation, the grouping, the costuming and make-up, the setting, props, lighting and use of colour, the use of contrast or juxtaposition, tension and pace. Every stage and feature of the dramatic production has and/or will involve processes of translation. (1980, pp. 1-2)

The constituents of theatre as a language or semiotic system are outlined more systematically by different theoreticians of theatre semiotics, though many of the elements enlisted by them are identical with the aspects of performance as translation discussed by Gostand. Fischer-Lichte's main categories are actor's activities; actor's appearance; spatial signs; and nonverbal acoustic signs (1992, pp. 18-128). In a very

elaborate model of cultural codes in the theatre Keir Elam distinguishes between systemic codes; linguistic ones; general intertextual codes; textual structural codes; formal presentational codes; epistemic codes; aesthetic principles; logical codes; behavioural ethical codes; ideological codes; psychological and psychoanalytic principles; historical codes (1980, pp. 57-62).¹⁰³ His model tends to be all-inclusive as he not only takes into account the physical, tangible elements of the theatre, but also numerous other factors, identifying the corresponding theatrical as well as dramatic subcodes that accompany these cultural codes. Patrice Pavis's system of the "parts of the stage" include actor; voice, music, rhythm; space, time, action; other material elements (costume, make-up, objects, lighting, smell, touching, tasting) (2003, pp. 55-197). Spoken text is also an almost indispensable component in the Western tradition, as he notes (2003, p. 198). Susan Bassnett breaks the semiotic system of theatre down to paralinguistic, gestural (kinesic), proxemic, linguistic, spatial, scenographic, and illuminational constituents (without actually proposing a full systematic taxonomy). She puts a special emphasis on paralinguistic systems:

It could be argued that the moment the written word is read aloud, it is translated into another language. Pitch, intonation, inflection, loudness, all such *paralinguistic systems*, substantially alter the written text. (Bassnett 1981, p. 48)

Gostand adopts a horizontal scope of translation, tracing the phenomenon in a variety of arts and genres. Patrice Pavis, however, in a similarly wide-ranging, yet more

¹⁰³ The systemic codes include general kinesic, proxemic, vestimentary, cosmetic, pictorial, musical and architectural ones; the linguistic codes include syntactic/semantic/phonological rules, pragmatic rules, rhetorical, paralinguistic, dialectal and idiolectal codes; the general intertextual codes include the influence of the experience of other aesthetic texts and cultural typologies; the textual structural codes are mainly related to general textual competence; the formal presentational codes comprise standards of realism and 'bracketing off' rules – the ability to accept the factitious in aesthetic texts; the epistemic codes include episteme and encyclopedia; the logical codes include general principles of cause and effect, for example; the behavioural ethical codes refer to general ethical standards and behavioural codes; the ideological codes are socio-economic and political codes; the historical codes comprise knowledge of historical events, notions regarding period characteristics, received portraits of historical figures, and so on (Elam 1980, pp. 57-62).

theoretical approach, proceeds in a vertical way when describing a translation sequence from (verbal) interlingual translation to the performance of that translation in a new linguistic-cum-cultural context (though perhaps the latter element enjoys no special emphasis). In a chapter of his *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, entitled “Towards Specifying Theatre Translation”, he proposes a four-fold system of reception, offering a well-structured model of concretisations.¹⁰⁴ Within Pavis’s model the first stage would be the textual concretisation of the ‘original’ in the receiving culture (the English translation of the essay uses the term ‘target culture’). This would correspond to the common, everyday meaning of the term ‘translation’. The next one is the dramaturgy. Pavis allows for an overlap of metaphors here. It seems from this model that the initial dramaturg (the person who starts working out a *mise-en-scène* for a translated play) is the translator. However, he also views the dramaturg proper as a potential translator or co-translator. As the Eörsi case study (Part One) demonstrated, dramaturgy and stage translation can be intertwined, and almost indistinguishable activities of reworking:

A dramaturg can also act as an interpreter for translator and director [...] and can thus prepare the ground for a future *mise en scène* by systemising dramatical choices, both by reading the translation T1 – which [...] is infiltrated by dramaturgical analysis – and possibly by referring to the original. (1991, p. 141)

The third aspect is stage concretisation, the “onstage testing of the text” (1991, p. 141):

This time the enunciation is finally realized; it is formed by the audience in the target culture, who confirm immediately whether the text is acceptable or

¹⁰⁴ The model he proposes resembles the many-in-one *matryoshka* doll (Russian nesting doll) in which the framing doll encloses all the smaller ones one after another. (A parallel more familiar to the British reader may be a set of Chinese boxes, although the *matryoshka* doll is purely ornamental, it does not involve a puzzle element. The puzzle may possibly be why Pavis contends that the viewer of the performance of the translated text can receive – even if in a distorted version – the source text.)

not. (1991, p. 141)¹⁰⁵

The fourth stage would be represented by the individual spectator's reception of the playtext via the performance. As Pavis asserts, "the recipient concretization [...] in the final analysis decides the use and meaning of the source text" (1991, p. 142). Thus, Pavis seems to suggest that all these levels enclose one another, and due to this concatenation the spectator receives the source text after all these intermediary stages. He appears to maintain that it is the source text that the receiver interprets on the basis of the performance of the translation, yet this can be debated. It is not at all the 'source' text but a multi-layered reworking of it that the receiver of the translated artefact encounters. The average receiver is likely to believe that (after all) it is the 'source' text that s/he receives; indeed, this is how an identification of Arany's voice with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* took place. However, scholarly investigation needs to look behind these concepts.

Despite the fact that taxonomies, models, or classifications are often far away from individual artifacts – which very rarely can be crammed into models without compromise – Pavis's model offers workable guidelines to assess theatrical translation, as it draws attention to different stages of the 'translation' process. However, here the model will not be systematically used, mainly due to the fact that it does not engage in the discussion of cultural differences that may occur in translations in various ethnic communities; neither does it give much thought to the possible differences between the contexts in which a performance would be received in the two (or often more) cultures. Amongst these one should elaborate on the

¹⁰⁵ Parenthetically, translators for the theatre often think in similar terms. They look forward to how the audience will respond to the text. Ádám Nádasdy cites the well-known English proverb – the proof of the pudding is in the eating – in his (Hungarian) essay promoting his translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* shortly before its *première* (1994, p. 38).

various consequences of the time gap between the original and the translation or production, in relation to the different *Weltanschauung*, staging technique, acting and directing traditions, not to mention the critical reception. Patrice Pavis, like Erika Fischer-Lichte, does not elaborate at length on the possible connections between the literary reception of a translated play and its staging, which are bound to differ immensely because of the different internal structures of the two arts (literature and theatre), be it domestic works of a community or translated plays.

Even if one accepts the gist of Pavis's argument, one might completely disagree with his suggestion that the atmosphere of the first or any follow-up performances of the original in its original cultural context have to be transformed into any receiving cultures. Let us look at this in the light of the debate over domestication and foreignisation, which has been discussed in the Introduction. Although the chief proponent of the above notions, Lawrence Venuti (1995), examines the issues exclusively in terms of verbal translation, primarily in fiction and non-fiction prose, the issue of the borrowing or reconceiving foreignness with regard to non-verbal components of a performance can also be linked to the problematics outlined by Venuti, on grounds provided by Schleiermacher. The act of trying to preserve, or rather, recreate non-verbal aspects of a performance when translating the text into a different language, raises several problems. The underlying view is that it is most probably a production, rather than a verbal text, that is meant to be translated (by a new mechanism of authorship potentially including the commissioner, the translator in the traditional sense, the director, and so on). That is to say, it is the original, and thus, authentic production (the 'source text' of this intersemiotic translation process) that is intended to be copied, or reiterated, often with the (rather naive and debatable) belief in retaining the spirit of the original. Providing 'the same'

or very similar culture-specific setting, costume, music, imitation of accent, and so on, does not achieve the same effect in the audience for the basic reason that neither the performance text nor the audience is identical. Foreignising effects are interpreted differently to the manner in which these effects are responded to in the authentic cultural context of the ‘original’.

Another way of eliciting ‘similar’ response is by working out a domesticating translation, which systematically tries to find counterparts of culture-related elements. Intersemiotic and interlingual translation can thus overlap, too. A case in point is a recent Hungarian production of Chekhov’s classic, *Three Sisters* (1991). Issues to do with the reworking of culturally charged items, even though they were not attempting to revitalise any of the Russian performances of the ‘original’, are amply explored by András Nagy in his essay entitled “A Samovar is a Samovar is a Samovar” (2000). Nagy stresses that even though the production team at the Játékszín Theatre in Budapest managed to re-place inherently Russian cultural items to a reasonable extent, they were baffled by the samovar, which they found to be quintessentially Russian. They left it in the otherwise highly domesticated production as a marker of untranslatability (Nagy 2000, p. 156). At the same time, this choice can also be seen as indicative of a respect for otherness. One can, however, find faults with the *mise-en-scène* of such a production regarding its consistency: why the samovar only, and why not other culture-specific references, such as *pirog*¹⁰⁶ or Lermontov’s poem too? Where is the borderline between translatable and untranslatable signs? In a similar vein, Ernst O. Fink gives an account of a struggle with culture-specific *realia* (for

¹⁰⁶ *Pirog* is a type of stuffed pasty, originally from Russia.

instance, ship names) when it comes to German productions of Eugene O'Neill's sea plays. "[I]t is not so much the language of the text that may fail to reach the addressee in the audience, as [...] that of 'things'" (1980, p. 78).¹⁰⁷ As Pavis himself admits,

[W]e cannot simply translate a linguistic text into another; rather we confront and communicate heterogeneous cultures and situations of enunciation that are separated in space and time. (1992b, p. 136)

The German theatre semiotician Erika Fischer-Lichte sets up a tripartite system of translation from page to stage¹⁰⁸ when she distinguishes between linear, structural and global transformation. The linear type implies a sequential following of the written text in the stage version. "[T]he process moves from sentence to sentence, from statement to reply, from dialogue to dialogue" (1992, p. 197). Nevertheless, it is questionable that in such a transformation the meaning is constituted from sentence to sentence; one may argue that the cast, especially the director, should have an overall interpretation. Fischer-Lichte stresses that working out the linkage of these small units is rudimentary to this way of transformation. Having agreed with this, one may still emphasise that a close interpretation of the whole play is just as essential when it comes to staging a play, otherwise the production will fall apart. "The mode of structural transformation proceeds from complex substructures such as stage character, space, scene, plot" (1992, p. 198). These subtexts, in Fischer-Lichte's opinion, are by their nature different "from the corresponding subtexts of the literary text" (1992, p. 198). Some of them can even become relatively independent:

The subtext may be that of and structured by a particular spatial conception; an impression created with the colors and forms of the decorations, costumes, and lighting; a specific choreographic arrangement of the figures and a fine musical harmonization of their voices, etc. In this case, an underlying structure is again initially created by theatrical signs used simultaneously, and

¹⁰⁷ For a similar example – a discussion of sailing terminology in different Hungarian translations of *The Tempest* – see Forgács 2002.

¹⁰⁸ The American translation of Fischer-Lichte's book does not utilise the currently fashionable phrase *from page to stage*; Pavis himself borrows it from Gay McAuley's projects (cf. Pavis 1992a, p. 46).

it is on the basis of this structure that all changes are then introduced and understood. (1992, p. 199)

This aspect is a common point between Fischer-Lichte's and Patris Pavis's system, as Pavis also stresses the importance of the non-verbal aspects of theatre translation. As he remarks, "Mise en scène is always a parable on the impossible exchange between the verbal and non-verbal" (1992a, p. 31). As will be demonstrated later, the back projections employed in the Pécs performance can be seen as emerging as a powerful nonverbal subtext, one that almost has a life of its own. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the setting. Although Fischer-Lichte does not give very specific examples of this type of translation, it can be assumed that in terms of characters she implies interpretations slightly or even radically different to the written text, or choosing one or more of the traits of a *dramatis persona* to focus upon in the performance. The former problematics raise further questions of reception: which interpretation of the written text should one consider, since one is not the first reader or innocent reader of the text, nor is the text innocent, as it has a reception history. How the Pécs performance translates the characters onto the stage will be discussed later in more detail. The production certainly has examples of one character's subtext receiving additional significance, such as the father's ghost having a video *Leitmotif*, and being on the stage for more time than the play-as-text indicates, and thus, more time than many receivers would expect. The difficulty in such cases, as Fischer-Lichte notes, arises from the coordination of these subtexts and their meanings. Again, the connection between the subtexts, as in the previously described mode, is of basic importance. This is also emphasised by Reba Gostand:

Within each medium, there are yet further processes of translation involved in the choice and arrangement of the verbal and non-verbal elements of theatre – the music (and all the vocal, mechanical, electrical or natural sound effects), the silences, the action, movement or immobility (including gesture, stage-

business, mime, dance), the characterisation, the grouping, the costuming and make-up, the setting, props, lighting and use of colour, the use of contrast or juxtaposition, tension and pace. Every stage and feature of the dramatic production has and/or will involve processes of translation. (1980, pp. 1-2)

Regarding the aforementioned Pécs performance, when in the video sequence some of the images do not easily correspond to the verbal text that they are supposed to ‘illustrate’, this poses a hermeneutic crux. Some of the images are only slightly related to the text by far-fetched associations or suggest various kinds of interpretations when one tries to see them in the context of the whole performance. Indeed, some of them gain a different interpretation when reconsidered in retrospect at the end of the viewing, not only because such a ‘rereading’ attempts to fit everything together but also because many structural units are repeated in some form within the performance, and these instances can be better pieced together and analysed at the end.

The most creative theatrical reworking of a play in Fischer-Lichte’s paradigm would be the global transformation. This is what one would call *adaptation* in everyday parlance, since it shapes the outcome of the translation process to fit the norms and expectations of the receiving community or the individual director to a considerable extent, even to the detriment of the integrity of the ‘source text’ (or the idea of the ‘source text’ in the receiver’s mind). Treating the previous two types as “possible subordinate forms of realization”, this mode “takes as its guiding principle the question as to the most appropriate way of constituting that meaning as a theatrical sign in a given communicative context which the subjects participating in the performance believe they have found to be the meaning of the literary text” (1992, p. 200). This is a flexible approach that tolerates, encourages even, omissions, additions, the shifting of scenes, soliloquies, or snippets of dialogues around.

However, such a performance “can be related to individual elements or substructures of the literary text only with great difficulty – indeed, in some cases it is not possible to establish such a relation” (1992, p. 200).

In general, this thesis would refer to a performance being *based on* a given play instead of calling it a performance *of* the play. The widespread usage of the latter term is an expression of the ancillary status of performance in relation to the written text. The phrase *based on* is even more relevant when it comes to cases where it is hardly possible to see the performance using the script, employing traditional character development, and so on. The preposition *of* might suggest that the performance serves a fuller understanding of its source, and does not direct the viewer to see it as something quasi-autonomous, yet strongly related intertextually to a certain play-as-text. Fischer-Lichte’s third type corresponds to Fischlin and Fortier’s argument on performance as adaptation:

Adaptation as a material, performance practice can involve both radical rewritings, and a range of directorial and theatrical practices, from the omission or addition of passages (or even scenes) to suit a particular director’s requirements to the creation of a material practice that takes into account the public demand for spectacle, one that places Shakespeare in direct competition with the rock concert, sporting event, or cinematic blockbuster. (2000, p. 17)

Fischer-Lichte does not avoid the compulsory excuse made by theoreticians for offering types that do not exist in practice in their clear-cut versions. As she asserts, the modes “are all only thought of as ideal types that will hardly ever be used exclusively in the form described here. Rather, they represent certain dominant trends that may be stressed in respectively different ways in the transformational process” (1992, p. 201). She also asserts that these modes more or less dominate certain periods of theatre history: the linear one was typical of German classicism, the

structural one characterised Romantic, naturalist and symbolist drama, and although she is not very explicit about this, she hints at global transformation as prevalent in the postmodern, though the latter is not governed by a single dominant theatrical code.

Having recognised the complexity of the language of theatre, especially due to a number of nonverbal components, the question inevitably arises: how can a performance be pinned down and assessed? A performance is a transitory, ephemeral event. One may argue that full participation in the event can only happen if one is present – there and then. This is by no means to say that one cannot do academic research on a particular performance – yet, it needs to be conducted with the understanding that the object of the investigation, the theatre performance, is ‘gone’, has passed. The event, like any live event, cannot be repeated, since every single night of the same production will be at least slightly different. As Susan Bassnett summarises, “The performance at any given time will never be identical to any other” (1981, p. 50). Still, watching a production more than once, like rereading a text, helps in interpreting it, in placing the patches, the subtexts together. A production can be recollected from one’s memories (if the researcher saw the performance s/he writes on). It cannot be fully recorded, since a video recording cannot store ‘everything’ from a performance; a great deal depends on the camera angles, light and colour distortion, and so on. Cameramen represent a certain perspective; they record the production from a certain position, and it is impossible to show everything that happens on stage at a given moment in time. An individual viewer would not notice ‘everything’ either, but (at least) it is his or her own filter, and not that of the cameramen, through which s/he sees the production. One can rely on performance reviews – being aware that they are individual readings themselves rather than quasi-

objective witness statements.¹⁰⁹ A copy of the playscript may also help with revivifying memories and closely examining the translation from page to stage. Interviews with cast (conducted by the researcher or others) and a detailed programme may also prove useful; however, one should not become too absorbed in finding out about the director's and the cast's interpretive intentions. The initial intention might be absolutely irrelevant from the perspective of the outcome. The following reading of the Pécs performance will benefit from the present writer's viewing experience (two nights), a video copy and the script of the production, performance reviews with accompanying photographs, the programme of the production, and interviews with the cast in the media.

Contextualising the Pécs production

Regarding the three stagings of Nádasdy's translation to date, the Pécs performance can be located somewhere between the structural and the global type of intersemiotic translation (as defined by Fischer-Lichte), the Debrecen performance (premiered 15 October 1999) between the linear and the structural, while the one at Thália (December 2002) is generally of the global type. The latter radically reworked Nádasdy's *Hamlet*, for example, by playing the Danish national anthem in the first scene (which is the first court scene here), thus attempting to reinscribe some kind of Danishness into the 'Hamlet' palimpsest. This scene does not only mark a different place but a different moment in time, too, because – curiously – Arany's translation is

¹⁰⁹ For instance, László Zappe, one of the reviewers of the Pécs performance, sees the Hamlet-Laertes relationship as an exceptionally – and unproportionately – developed one. In his opinion, this is largely due to the spectacular fencing scene. It might be argued, however, that it is rather the awkward, almost wordless Hamlet-Horatio relationship that is a particularly noteworthy subtext when it comes to relationships between characters.

spoken in the first scene. This reads as a nostalgic postmodernist act of looking back to an atavistic golden age, a mythical state of the language and culture: this is the language in which the Dane first became a widely known ‘traveller’ throughout Hungarian-speaking lands. This device makes the viewer pause and remember that the theme is Danish-related in principle (not that Shakespeare’s plays were meticulously written in terms of period detail). In Hungary, the play is usually not presented in a context reminiscent of Danish culture; generally it is either presented as ‘universal’ or alluding to things Hungarian. This is why this reinscription, as well as that of Árpád Juhász (to be discussed in Part Three), is useful; it underlines that the Denmark of *Hamlet* is a metaphor replenished with newer and newer meanings (which do not tend to have much to do with Denmark itself). Another novelty is the addition of the character of Claudia (performed by Andrea Keresztes), an uninhibited career woman as a female counterpart to Claudius. Liberties were taken to cut, contract or mute several other parts. Though Rosencrantz and Guildenstern appear on the scene, neither utters a word. Some characters may be interpreted as being ‘replaced’, translated by music (cf. Csizner 2003, p. 17). Some character traits have also been changed, and this is apparent in plot alterations too; for instance, there is a lustful encounter between Ophelia and Claudius. The term *tradaptation* (introduced by Robert Lapage and further circulated and modified by Jatinder Verma and Derrick Cameron) would also aptly describe this performance, since it is an adaptation of a translation (although the term primarily refers to a text that is translation and adaptation at the same time; a heavily domesticated translation, cf. Cameron 2000, pp. 117-18). Out of the three productions of, or rather, based on, Nádasdy’s translation of *Hamlet*, the one at Pécs has been chosen for a thoroughgoing analysis, since it is an illustrative mixture of the three kinds of translation for the stage

identified by Fischer-Lichte; particularly of the last two. The attention devoted to certain substructures is apparent, and the daring *mise-en-scène* and the multiplication of characters validate it as approaching the category of global transformation.

The playwright and theatre practitioner Luigi Pirandello elaborates on the inescapably falsifying work of the translator, alongside that of the actor and the illustrator. In an essay from 1908 Pirandello ponders how these three professions reinterpret, and thus recreate the sources of their work. In Susan Bassnett's understanding, "He condemns this as a distortion, but accepts that there is no alternative to this paradox" (1985, p. 93).

The performance staged in the studio theatre of the National Theatre at Pécs was characterised by a playscript that was easy to follow, traditional character formation, and a lavish profusion of back projections. These are the three pillars of the performance on which our analysis will be built. This fits in with the three areas Pirandello signals as 'intrusive' in 'the text': translation (and dramaturgy), the actors' creative interpretation of the characters, and the visual components of the production, which provide much more than ancillary illustration. First, there will be a general account of the performance *vis-à-vis* the different constituents of its 'language', and its debateable consistency. This will be followed by the discussion of the three main areas (or, in Fischer-Lichte's term, subtexts) outlined above. From a cultural perspective, however, following such systems point by point may appear to be dissecting rather than investigating a performance, indeed, making it into a lifeless object. As noted before, strict semiotic analyses often exclude historicity (although Elam's 1980 model includes a historical aspect, too); therefore, such an approach will not be pursued. Yet, insights from semiotics on the complexity of theatrical language (especially Fischer-Lichte's notion of subtext) have informed the following reading

of the performance.

The actors of the performance, who work in the psychological manner of realistic and naturalistic theatre – a method common in Western culture – are located in a multifunctional setting, devoid of any pomp or luxury. The setting is the same throughout; however, some of the props and arrangement are multifunctional, and surtitles are also projected onto the background screen in order to name the locations of some scenes – in a Brechtian fashion. The main components of the set are fleecy boxes of orange and grey, with glass panes on them, which are neon-lit with various colours at different points of the performance. They provide an artificial atmosphere – outside of time and space – in contrast with a realistic or historical setting. The blocks may also evoke a cemetery atmosphere (cf. Nagy 2003). No wonder the Ghost almost ‘lives there’: he is a quiet presence onstage almost throughout the whole performance. The labyrinthine aspect of the setting (cf. Zábrádi 2003, p. 26 and Liszka 2003, p. 6) may assert the reading of *Hamlet* as a story of quest (for truth, for justice, for peace of mind, for the meaning of life, and so on), even though the whole performance may not confirm this reading so readily. There is a scene where one of the boxes functions as the venue for Hamlet’s great soliloquy, then it represents a stage for the visiting company, and later on it also works as Gertrude’s bed in the closet scene. There is a green-walled multipurpose pool approximately left-centre on the stage. Nagy (2003) thinks it is predictable on the basis of a single glance at the scenery that Hamlet and Laertes will jump into the basin during the final scene, which they do accordingly. There is a staircase on the stage, above which the royal couple is often seated on one of the boxes during the course of the performance. The upper gallery of the studio stage is also put to use in this production; it is mainly the night watchmen that are placed there. Hamlet also descends on a cord from there, as

Liszka remarks, exclusively for the sake of the spectacle (“a látvány, és csakis a látvány kedvéért”; 2003, p. 6). The costumes designed by Anikó Kovalcsik are rather modest and simplistic; far from ideologically neutral but not suggestive of strong readings either. They correspond to the – by now not so innovative – ‘timelessness’ conjectured by the setting. The only exception, when they do signify a specific period, is when the players are clad in stereotypical Elizabethan costume for the mousetrap scene.

In the spirit of *ut pictura spectaculum*,¹¹⁰ the performance focuses on visuality, which is at least as vital here as the playscript itself, especially due to the video installation screened in the background of the stage. As Mariann Zábrádi observes,

[A] ma nagyon is divatos háttérvetítés [...] a modern, Nádasdy Ádám fordította szöveg, a minimalizált díszlet, az időtlen, kortalan jelmezek szövevényében erős kohéziót hoz létre.

[The nowadays very fashionable background screening creates a strong cohesion in the texture of Ádám Nádasdy’s modern translation, the setting minimalised to the utmost, and the costumes timeless.] (2003, p. 26)

The body language of the actors should also be included within the complex visual experience, especially because of the emphasis on movement and facial gestures in this kind of theatre. The relation between the modern setting and traditional character formation is a problematic aspect of the play. As Liszka points out, “a színészeknek nagy segítség lett volna, ha a rendhagyó térhez nem hagyományos használati utasítást kapnak” [it would have been great help to the actors if they had been given non-traditional instructions to go with the unconventional setting] (2003, p. 6). As he argues, “Sokkal jobbak azok a jelenetek, ahol figyelmünket egy-egy arcvonásra,

¹¹⁰ Cf. Elam 1980, p. 68, where he uses the term referring to nineteenth-century two-dimensional realist theatre with paintings in the background, while the term is used here in a much more general sense: with reference to the importance of image, of the principle of ‘showing’ in the theatre.

mozdulatra szabad szűkítenünk; ilyenkor tűnik ki a színészek valódi kvalitása” [The scenes where we can narrow down our attention to a facial movement or a gesture are much better] (Liszka 2003, p. 6). This is a general problem with modern-dress productions; W. B. Worthen emphasises the eclecticism of such performances (2001, p. 137). The question can be raised whether such productions can offer anything novel, or they are just replicas of one another in terms of style or technique. In like vein, Imre Nagy’s review sheds light on practical difficulties in the modernisation of *mise-en-scène*, where he sees a clash between text and setting. He hastes to point out inconsistencies between the modern set and the rather less modern plot:

[...] a látvány és a szó folyamatosan összeütközik s viaskodni kényszerül egymással. Mert ha Hamlet levelét például bukósisakos motorosküldönc kézbesíti, nem értjük, miként lehet, hogy ennek viszont ‘hajósok hozták’ (hacsak nem űrhajósok), s ha ennyire fejlett a technika Helsingörben (még mobiltelefon is van), ugyan miért kell a függöny mögé bújni, ha ki akarnak hallgatni valakit, ahelyett, hogy Polonius, lehallgatókészüléket telepítene Hamlet szobájába.

[The spectacle and the word continually clash, and they are driven to fight against each other. If Hamlet’s letter is delivered by a motorcycle dispatch rider wearing a crash helmet, we don’t understand why it was delivered to him by sailors (unless they were sailors from space); and if technology is so developed in Elsinore (they even have mobile phones), why on earth do they need to hide behind a curtain when they want to overhear someone – rather than Polonius having Hamlet’s room tapped.]¹¹¹ (Nagy 2003)

In fact, the performance does not appear to exploit the potential of Nádasdy’s modern idiom. For example, in Nádasdy’s version of the great soliloquy the Hungarian for ‘blade’ (penge) is used as opposed to a dagger. However, the Pécs Hamlet presses a gun against his temple (as early as his first soliloquy).

On the basis of this performance, *Hamlet* obviously does not suggest a Renaissance play. The only time in the performance when the Renaissance is clearly

¹¹¹ It can be parenthetically noted here that Ophelia is indeed ‘wired up’ in Michael Almereyda’s filmic reimagining of the nunnery scene in his 2000 *Hamlet* film.

evoked is the mousetrap scene, with the players in Renaissance costume. This is a frequent device in eclectic modern-day performances: the ‘quotation’ may induce cultural nostalgia by transferring to Shakespeare’s time the part of the play that tells us so much about the nature of theatre, or it can contribute to a postmodern *mélange* of varied intertexts. Here, the case tends to be the latter.

There is a discrepancy between any of the potential English ‘source texts’ from the turn of the 17th century, and the contemporary Hungarian-speaking performance with a modern-day *mise-en-scène* and nonverbal additions. Is this tension irreconcilable? The performance may baffle the viewer by its motley style: there are indeed inconsistencies if one wishes to see the production as that *of* a Renaissance play. The performance – a translation from page to stage – is not directly ‘based on’ Shakespeare’s text but on the late-twentieth century translation (the main ‘original’ of which is a Shakespeare text). Even the assumption that the main ‘source’ of Nádasdy’s translation is an English Renaissance play is debatable; Arany’s text may also prove to be a ‘source’, or at least, a source of inspiration, a driving force for emulation or competition. Other intertexts (for example, in this case, Bonnefoy’s translation) may also come into the picture.

The unavoidable discrepancy does not seem to be completely resolved by this performance. It was William Poel who introduced what Worthen (2001, p. 137) terms theatrical antiquarianism – imitating Elizabethan costume and theatre space –, and opened up new avenues for modern-dress performances (cf. van Dijk 2001, p. 163). This represented a break with nineteenth-century historical literalism or, in W. B. Worthen’s term, dramatic pictorialism (2001, p. 137). However, as Maarten van Dijk claims, such ‘concept’ productions are often “fixed in meaning [...] through the director’s super-objective concept” (2001, p. 163). The question inevitably arises: has

modernisation become by now an almost compulsory, yet rather exhausted convention, a cliché? Isn't this alleged timelessness also a kind of period setting and period costuming in itself? Peter Brook is severely critical, almost intolerant of such mediocre approaches. As he famously contends,

The Deadly Theatre [...] means bad theatre. As this is the form of theatre we see most often, and as it is most closely linked to the despised, much-attacked commercial theatre it might seem a waste of time to criticize it further. But it is only if we see that deadliness is deceptive and can appear anywhere, that we will become aware of the size of the problem. (Brook 1968, p. 11)

On the other hand, one has to consider the audience that is expected to attend the performance. The average Hungarian audience in provincial theatres is mainly middleclass, middle-aged, not necessarily with a professional interest in the theatre or other arts. Pécs is in a more privileged position in this respect, being a city with a renowned university. One can introduce novelties, and thus educate an audience, or sensitise them to new ways of theatre-making, but one always has to use some familiar elements, and to some extent, this accounts for what the cast and crew under Hargitai's leadership are doing. Convention and innovation are both at play. For instance, Ophelia sings her songs to the traditional tune.¹¹² This is a common point between this and the 1999 Debrecen production.

The playscript

As noted earlier, the text spoken is Ádám Nádasdy's translation of *Hamlet* (revised several times since 1999, when, it was commissioned by the Csokonai Theatre in Debrecen). The production consists of two parts, of seven and six *tableaux*,

¹¹² It appears that some of the 'original' tunes (from Shakespeare's day) have survived into contemporary times. About Ophelia's songs see Jenkins's extensive notes in Shakespeare 1982, pp. 529-535.

respectively, which are further divided into scenes in the script. The way of cutting the text is sober and economical, in keeping with contemporary audience expectations. This results in a fluid and fast-flowing script. The dialogue as heard on stage gives the impression that a little bit of everything is kept, not a single focal scene is missing, not a single element of the main plot is omitted.¹¹³ However, the devotee might miss Osric's scene in which he breaks the news of the duel, or the conversation between Gertrude and the mad Ophelia (IV/5). Ophelia has only one mad scene here (the one with the royal couple and Laertes), which makes her distribution of flowers even more powerful. (This scene is shortened, too; only two of the songs feature; yet, there is additional emphasis paid to Ophelia's distribution of flowers and the manner in which her madness affects people.) Altogether, the illusion given to 'lay', unprofessional spectators is that they encounter the 'full' story of *Hamlet*. Changes to do with the reassigning of lines and passages (for instance, those of the night watchmen) are hardly noticeable to most theatre-goers, and do not break the illusion of watching an 'authentic' *Hamlet*.¹¹⁴ This is a widespread dramaturgical device. For instance, in the 1997 Nyíregyháza *Hamlet*, directed by István Verebes, the following lines by Fortinbras were reassigned to Horatio, which startled one of the reviewers, Viktória Radics (1998, p. 33): "mert ha él, kiváló / Király lett volna valószínűleg" [if he were alive, he probably would have made a fine king] ("For he was likely. Had he been put on, / To have prov'd most royal") (Shakespeare 1993, p.

¹¹³ The phrase 'focal scene' is borrowed from Anthony B. Dawson. He mentions the Ghost scene, the nunnery scene, the play scene, the closet scene, the mad scene and the final scene as focal scenes (1995, p. 258).

¹¹⁴ The performance (verbally speaking) starts with what in the New Arden edition is I/1;15. For example, Bernardo (the Hungarian counterpart to Barnardo) is the sentinel on duty from the very beginning, his conversation with Francisco, the previous night watchman, is deleted.

160).¹¹⁵

Some textual changes are adjustments to the casting and *mise-en-scène*. For example, Rosencrantz draws Hamlet's attention to three players (rather than a whole visiting company). The text is altered since the studio setting and style, and the economical casting would otherwise make the mention of a whole company ridiculous.

Some changes make the play less political, perhaps concentrating more on the solitude of the individual. The discussion about the relation between old Hamlet and old Fortinbras is cut, together with the suspicion about arming the country.

Generally speaking, passages that would characterise the speaker in great detail are often cut; dialogues are shortened to their bare key sentences, such as "No és Laertes, mi újság veled? Egy kérésről volt szó: mi az, Laertes?" [And now, Laertes, what's the news with you? There was something about a request; what is that, Laertes?] ("And now, Laertes, what's the news with you? You told us of some suit: what is't, Laertes?") in I/2 of the playtext (Nádasdy 2000, p. 356). The rest, which is rather characteristic of Claudius's diction in this particular utterance, is omitted. This aspect of the performance does not prevent spectators from following the action, but may simplify the characterisation of the *dramatis personae*.

The performance is not fragmentalised by the presentation of the famous soliloquies. They form an integral part of the performance as a whole. Some of them are actually devised with some other characters in the background (on back projections or otherwise isolated from Hamlet). Hamlet's "O that this too sullied

¹¹⁵ This is not the final (or at least) current version by Eörsi. He changed this into "mert minden jel szerint / kiváló király lett volna belőle" [because according to all signs, he would have made a fine king] (Shakespeare 1999, p. 90).

flesh...” soliloquy is spoken with Gertrude and Claudius in the background. They are holding their arms around each other, while facing the audience on the top of the staircase, in front of the projection screen, which constantly shows a still image of the exquisite reception (retained from the very beginning of the performance). István Fillár, the actor playing Hamlet, revealed in an interview how crucial the delivery of the great soliloquy was to him. This ties in with the widespread treatment of this speech as a *pars pro toto* for the whole play (discussed in more detail in Part One):

A legnagyobb gondot persze az a bizonyos „Lenni vagy nem lenni” monológ okozta. Ez az egyetlen, amelyet szinte a semmiből, egy jelenet elején kell elkezdeni. Ezt kihagyni nem lehet, így aztán neki kell szaladni, persze okosan kell gondolkodni...

[The greatest concern was, of course, the “To be or not to be” soliloquy. This is the only one that has to be started almost out of nothingness, at the beginning of a scene. It cannot be omitted, thus you’ve got to get on with it; of course you’ve got to think about it.] (Kónya 2003, p. 18.)

It is not only the soliloquies that are carefully integrated; all the scenes and *tableaux* are closely linked together, often with one of the speakers for the next scene already walking in. For instance, it is while Hamlet’s love poem is read out by Polonius that the eponymous character in the flowery T-shirt walks in onstage. The scene is acted out in a conventional way that signifies that Hamlet does not overhear anything.

On the basis of the dramaturgy, the performance would be between a linear and a structural translation, certainly not a global one, since no major shifts or cuts have been executed. However, in order to carry out a complex reading of the production, we need to move beyond the playscript towards some other subtexts of the performance. For instance, the conversation between Hamlet and Polonius is accompanied by a change of costume, possibly referring to his pretended madness (which is first manifest in this scene).

The characters

I: Translating characters onto the stage

The next larger section of the analysis will focus on the characters. In a written dramatic text one can discern names and designations for persons, such as of species, sex, social status, profession, and type. However, in the theatre “the dramatis persona appears in the shape of the concrete physicality of an actor” (Fischer-Lichte 1992, p. 195):

[T]he actor’s body is used and understood as the interpretant for the linguistic signs of the name. The text assigned to the name can be realized as verbal speech by the actor who functions as the interpretant of this name, and in this manner the text is transformed into theatrical signs, such as paralinguistic and kinesic signs. (Fischer-Lichte 1992, p. 196)

Having been inspired by Christy Desmett (1999, p. 11), who pinpoints an overlapping area between adaptation studies and character criticism, further encouraged by Reba Gostand’s emphasis on the actors’ contribution to translating a play to the stage, as well as largely prompted by the performance itself, this section will elaborate in detail on translation at the level of character. One of the noteworthy aspects of translation is the mediation between traditional formations of these particular characters, retranslating conventions (if possible) in a Bloomian struggle with the past.

István Fillár’s **Hamlet** is essentially an intellectual and a sophisticate. One cannot tell whether he plays Hamlet from the heart or from the head; he is compassionate besides being a man of letters. One may disagree with the reviewer Imre Nagy (2003), who claims that Fillár’s Hamlet is one-sidedly rational. When Horatio and the night watchmen tell him that they saw his father, his almost patronising attitude is that of the sober and rational university student. It is clear from his mimicking that he thinks his friends’ nerves are overstrained. After a moment of hesitation, however, he still decides to devote some attention to the strange

phenomenon, not out of conviction but being determined not to lose the smallest chance of communicating with his father. There is some resignation, forgiveness and wisdom about him when, in the nunnery scene, he realises from Ophelia's controversial behaviour that he is entrapped, and that she has actually contributed to that. Andrea Simon carefully develops this scene in **Ophelia's** role.¹¹⁶ Her acting alternates between two distinct attitudes here: she lends herself to her emotions for Hamlet, while now and again she suddenly becomes aware that she is not supposed to do so, since she is being watched; she looks aside, and pulls herself together adopting a different – rather distanced – style and intonation. In this performance when Hamlet asks Ophelia the famous question 'Hol az apád?' [Where's your father?] ("Where's your father?") (III/1; 130-131), this works as a rhetorical question to which he already knows the answer. His 'Jó napot' [Good day] ("Farewell") (III/1; 143) is undoubtedly addressed to the eavesdropping Polonius as he turns backstage towards them. The visual aspect of the act of eavesdropping is very important here. Fillár's Hamlet is not a typically delaying protagonist, neither is he suffering from the burden of humankind. His pangs of pain and his disappointment are rather in the realm of the personal, his 'mandate' – if it exists at all – appears to be the healing of these wounds. He does not volunteer to bear the gravity of everyman's sorrows; he knows that reconciling his own troubles or ghosts is enough of a task. If he has the traits of a saviour at all, that is most apparent when he gives the dead Polonius a tender and firm embrace. One of his most authentic (that is believable) moments is when – in the very same scene – he plainly and honestly answers "Nem tudom" [I don't know] ("Nay, I

¹¹⁶ It certainly is not a deliberate intertext – though directors often play with all sorts of cultural connotations latent in the physical appearance of actors – that Andrea Simon has a sensitive and intellectual face reminiscent of Kristin Scott Thomas.

know not”) to Gertrude’s question regarding what he has done. At this point many members of the audience start laughing, perhaps an instance of self-recognition – *de te fabula narratur* –: neither the character nor the viewer finds their way in this turmoil.¹¹⁷ He does not need to pretend madness; his irony, that of the sharp and sensitive ‘university wit’, verges on bitterness and wryness, yet it does not reach sarcasm or cynicism, due to the caring personality that Fillár’s Hamlet represents. This Hamlet at Pécs does not think in terms of proven, clear-cut truths and theorems. It is credible and deeply meant when he quips, “végül is semmi se jó vagy rossz, csak a véleményünk teszi azzá” [nothing is either good or bad, only our opinion makes it so] (“for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so”) (II/2; 249-250).¹¹⁸

Hamlet cuddles his father, who appears as a flesh-and-blood figure, with puerile self-abandoned oblivion, and – despite the utter surprise – with an air of naturalness. It needs to be emphasised that it is the father who appears, and not the ghostly aspect of this character, since his down-to-earth presence metaphorically suggests a presence of fathers in this postmodern pandemonium. **Old Hamlet** is not the least ghostly; it is his strikingly bright, and thus, otherworldly green coat that renders him closest to the ghost or may evoke a modicum of the mysticism traditionally attached to his character. His video *Leitmotif* may achieve a similar effect; this will be described further on.

One of the most poetic – and at the same time utterly nonverbal – moments of the performance is when the father, walking onstage in the closet scene, gently places

¹¹⁷ This is a difficult section to play, it was more accomplished on one of the nights the performance was viewed for this thesis, while it worked less well on the other.

¹¹⁸ For other translations of this quotation see Appendix One item 15.

Hamlet's hand into Gertrude's hand, which is reaching out to Hamlet's face for a caress. For one moment it seems the family is 'united', though this is a deception, since they do not all realise the togetherness captured by the moment. Old Hamlet cannot bear that his wife does not sense his presence, and he soon takes his leave – sad, at a slow pace. If one sees the performance as a translation of the play into the heterogeneous language of the theatre, the construction of this scene can be regarded as a nonverbal addition to the script. Robert Hapgood makes mention of a slightly similar tackling of this scene. In the 1989 RSC *Hamlet* the “ghost protectively cradles unresponding shoulders” (1999, p. 83). The 1980 RSC *Hamlet*, directed by John Barton, also featured a very corporeal ghost, acted by Raymond Westwell (Gussow 2000, p. 387).

In Pécs, after the first scene with the ghost, Hamlet is clad in shorts and a long white shirt with a colourful floral pattern (large red flowers), which is called by a reviewer the outfit of the “Californian Mambo Jack” with the indispensable revolver in his pocket (Liszka 2003, p. 6). However, this can also be seen as a sign of Hamlet descending into emotion, allowing himself to be more vulnerable when noticing that “the time is out of joint”.

Gertrude and Hamlet talk without relating to one another, they do not share a single moment of concord and harmony. This may come across as a Chekhovian effect, yet another intertext translated into this solitude-centred performance. Pálma Unger's Gertrude, like most Gertrudes down the centuries, has no identity of her own. She dotes on her new husband, and is completely exposed to her feelings and momentary sentiments, such as pity. She is moved by Hamlet's suffering, just as is she by Ophelia's madness, and she jumps in front of Claudius in haste in order to protect him when the bloodthirsty Laertes returns to court. Gertrude's figure could

have been ‘spiced up’ with a pinch of feminism; for instance, by allowing her more sensuality (and less of the blindness of love), more rationality or more independence, and more of a voice of her own in interpersonal relationships.¹¹⁹ It is shocking to notice how little the playtext’s Gertrude speaks in her conversations with Claudius (that is how few lines she is given). However, a director can grant her more independence via nonverbal means. Nevertheless, this Gertrude lacks both sobriety and intellect. In the final scene she rejects Claudius’s knightly arm when they walk in, yet later on she accepts it when she descends the throne hastily to get closer to Hamlet. Her decisions are made on the spur of the moment; there is no consistency in them. She is indeed an epitome of a person driven by her emotions and sentiments. Her bright red nail polish matches the commonness of her character. The snobbish pronunciation of the vowel *a* – an illabial vowel as opposed to the standard labial one – she uses in Hamlet’s name further emphasises her mediocrity. The same pronunciation in Claudius’s case is much less salutary, while it is hardly acceptable from Hamlet, who jumps into Ophelia’s grave saying “Hamlet vagyok” [I am Hamlet] (“This is I, Hamlet”), with the very same way of pronunciation. This is the only instance he uses this pronunciation; it is old-fashioned, overdone, and stagy in his case.

Sándor N. Szabó delivers **Claudius** consistently. His Claudius loves Gertrude, but his pride is more overwhelming and his self-discipline and determination more solid than allowing him to approach the dying Gertrude. He puts down his glass, he gives full attention to what is happening to her, but he does not make a single step to approach her (to soothe her pain or to say farewell). Only then, a few moments before

¹¹⁹ A useful essay summarising the feminist readings of Gertrude is by Sharon Ouditt: “Explaining Woman’s Frailty” (1996).

his own death, does his self-love reach its summit and become so fatally irreversible. Claudiuses not attempting to interrupt Gertrude's reach for the goblet are very common in the stage history of *Hamlet*. As Robert Hapgood recalls, "Brian Murray, with Kevin Kline, made a real attempt to stop the Queen." All he did, however, was take a long pause when saying "do [...] do not drink!" (1999, p. 271).

A well-crafted scene of N. Szabó's is the one in which he is a minor character from the perspective of the playtext. When the mad Ophelia is handing out the flowers (here, importantly: stones and bricks), Claudius receives the dandelion (*kutyatej*)¹²⁰ and daisy (*margaréta*) with a poker face, stolidly, not showing any compassion or, in fact, any feelings whatsoever. He keeps sitting there, cold, indifferent, and estranged. While everybody else is tending to Ophelia, he finds a moment when he quickly gets rid of the stones by putting them down by his side, hopefully unnoticed by the people around him. This is an accomplished translation of troubling qualm into theatrical language; he puts down the two stones as if they were burning his palms. He is not repentant, yet he is aware of his own sinfulness.

Polonius in stage history "has swung between the sweet and the powerful". He is played as an "old doddering fool" sometimes; other trends of acting Polonius include "a fool, a silly gentleman, a tiresome old windbag, [...] a wise man, a man of profound sense; [...] a supple underling, a king's tool [...], a real statesman, a masterly plotter; [...] the sublime of stupidity [...]; a clever roleplayer consciously enjoying playing an actor" (Rosenberg 1992, p. 256):

His famous precepts have been described as shallow schoolboy maxims, as phrases repeated parrot-like, and as the kind wisdom of a loving father - though he has also been called a cruel and manipulative parent, even, in connection with his daughter, touched with incestuous longing. (Rosenberg

¹²⁰ Nádasdy translates 'rue' as *kutyatej* (a synonym of *gyermekláncfű* and *pitypang*), which is a provincial and slightly pejorative name for 'dandelion'.

1992, p. 257)

Béla Stenczer's Polonius is more like a half-educated unctuous courtier, for whom the greed for advance, and the pleasure of being a busybody around the king is definitely more important than fatherly love and responsibility. He has no intention of comforting Ophelia after the nunnery scene; it is much more important for him to run after the king and desperately defend his theory that it is the madness of amorous affection in Hamlet that has stirred up his mind. His farewell to Laertes consists of instructions rather than advice; he does not speak them with caring and concern but with a routine indifference and a belief in his own importance. While he is giving his instructions, Ophelia – knowing her father's standard lines in such situations by heart – is aping him in the background, making the precepts sound really like “phrases repeated parrot-like” (Rosenberg 1992, p. 257), to the amusement of Laertes and the audience. This is at the same time an instance of creating another miniature play-within-the-play in the performance.¹²¹

As Marvin Rosenberg puts it, “Obviously seduced Ophelias are infrequently seen” (Rosenberg 1992, p. 248). This applies to Simon's **Ophelia** too. She is quiet, self-contained, rather introverted, yet craving for attention, and dominated by repressed emotions. She has not got enough ‘acting area’ in her life to express these emotions. In Marvin Rosenberg's words,

All of the other major characters have pasts signifying occupations: royalty, student, counsellor. Ophelia is essentially a person of relationships: smotherless, sister, daughter, sweetheart. (Rosenberg 1992, p. 236)

Here she seems to have a slightly more defined identity of her own; however, her

¹²¹ While *Hamlet* was still running, Stenczer also took up the role of Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet* at Pécs, and he was reviewed to have tackled the role very similarly to his formation of Polonius (cf. Zappe 2003b, p. 13). The director of *Hamlet*, Iván Hargitai, was assistant director of the *Romeo and Juliet* production (directed by Tamás Balikó).

almost childlike emotional attachment to a few other characters is highly emphasised.

Ophelia can count considerably more on **Laertes** (Lajos Széll Horváth) than on Polonius in this interpretation, who – despite finding his sister’s dotage overbearing – seems ready to offer her support as a considerate elder sibling. (This is how his body language reads.) Introverted though she may be, this Ophelia is full of unsublimated energy and vitality; it seems that some of her bottled up emotions, that are supposed to be concentrated on Hamlet, are also diverted to Laertes. It is all the more heartrending when, in her madness, she does not even seem to recognise Laertes. Their last common scene is when Laertes lifts Ophelia out of the multifunctional pool on the stage, which also works as the brook in which she drowns. It is unique to the performance, and not at all suggested by the playtext, that Laertes takes her out of the water (and carries the body offstage). This nonverbal instance of translation aptly and inventively reinforces Laertes’s caring love for Ophelia. Her mockery of Polonius during his instructions to Laertes underlines her intelligence, and may even reveal a gift for acting or parody. This line, however, will not be pursued in the production, unless one counts her distribution of ‘flowers’ as an act of creation.

Horatio (György Bajomi Nagy) is without doubt a lesser figure beside Hamlet in this interpretation. He is onstage for much of the time, yet his stage presence is noticeably passive: he speaks and moves little, being somewhat of a shadow around Hamlet. He is, for example, present in the background while Polonius is testing Hamlet, and Hamlet throws the book to him when he says “unalmas vén hülyék” [boring old morons] (“These tedious old fools”) (II/2; 219). He is present in the following scene, which is Hamlet’s first encounter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. During their conversation he walks closer to them when Guildenstern

confesses under prompting that they had been sent for. Horatio does not interfere in this scene, he just shows his concern from the background. He seems to be there as quiet support, and no more. This Horatio is reminiscent of the character function of the sidekick. It is not very clear from the performance how intimate and even-handed his relationship with Hamlet is. He comes across as inferior to Hamlet in terms of intelligence. When, in the gravediggers' scene, they are throwing the skull to each other, like children playing with a ball, Hamlet accompanies every sling with a witticism or pun. (Obviously, this is how the stage fiction is constructed; if one sees it from the perspective of the text being translated onto the stage, these lines appear to be spoken with the nonverbal aid of revisiting a game – and, probably, a memory – from childhood. This is feasible as Hamlet mentions how Yorick played with him when he was a child.) Horatio's face reveals that he cannot follow all of Hamlet's adages. Even if he understands them, he is not capable of repartee. He may not have the emotional intelligence, either, to appreciate the importance of these childhood memories for Hamlet.

The reputed Romanian director, Vlad Mugur, asserted in an interview that he was searching for a well-trained dog for Horatio's part for his 2000 *Hamlet* in Cluj (Kolozsvár) (Kolló 2001). The dog would have been faithfully listening to the eponymous character, would not have betrayed him, but, logically enough, he would not have been capable of expressing a sophisticated opinion or of advising Hamlet, either. According to the anecdote, Mugur did not find a suitable animal; however, the Pécs performance seems to come up with a metaphorical pet-dog Horatio, who is faithful but inferior. The Pécs production is ruthless with this character; he seems to have more importance on the page. This performance makes the point that Horatio – despite his affection for Hamlet – does not know or understand him. Before the

mousetrap Hamlet's trust in him is very emphatic. On the other hand, when Hamlet uses the metaphor of the recorder in order to illustrate to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern how they are treating him, he pushes Horatio away, too, together with the two former schoolmates. Using the metaphor of the sidekick in connection with this Horatio may tie in with the aspect of the performance as a crime story, an avenue of interpretation suggested by Imre Nagy in his aforementioned review. Such a reading, however, may not be plausible for the performance text as a whole.

II. Role multiplication

What happens when one actor is assigned to more than one linguistic designation (Fischer-Lichte's term) or, vice versa, when one designation is split between more than one person in the process of translating a play into a performance, is another thorny issue, and it is indeed central to this performance. On the basis of the performance reviews, the most acute Achilles' heel of the performance seems to be the aspect of role multiplication for actors. It is literally multiplication, since it is not only doubling or tripling of roles that the production uses. Like the props, some of the figures on the stage seem to have more than one life. What is intriguing about this is whether it is the character or the actor whom we see again. How are we meant to interpret this? Borrowing an expression made famous by Brian Clark, "whose life is it, anyway?" There is a terminological dilemma, since the Hungarian term *szerepösszevonás* literally means 'role contraction' or 'contraction of roles', which suggests that it is more or less the same, though multi-faceted, role that is performed by the respective actor. That is to say, one should assume some continuity between these roles or role components, which were different roles in the playtext (the

‘original’ of the intersemiotic translation). Here, however, the term ‘role multiplication’ will be used, in order to stress that it is usually more than two roles assigned to a single actor.¹²²

As will be argued, there is no logical and consistent artistic explanation in all cases for why certain roles are played by one and the same actor (not only in this production, but in a more general sense). Reviewers often put it down to thrifty and awkward budgeting.¹²³ However, the strategy is not to be condemned in itself. Problems only arise here because the multiplication in some cases appears to be meaningful, whereas in other cases, arbitrary. There seems to be no unified concept as to why and how to work out multiplication or contraction of characters. The programme uses a quotation from the contemporary playwright, translator and essayist György Spiró’s debated book entitled *Shakespeare szerepösszevonásai* [Role Contraction/Multiplication in Shakespeare]; however, the performance does not employ many of the doublings suggested by Spiró.¹²⁴ He argues for the multiplication of the roles of Ophelia, Voltimand, Fortinbras and Second gravedigger; Polonius, First gravedigger and Osric; Laertes, First Player, Francisco and Rosencrantz (the latter with a question mark); Rosencrantz and Marcellus; Guildenstern and Barnardo; and the multiplication of a few minor roles. The abovementioned citation in the

¹²² In English the term ‘doubling’ is usually used even to refer to more than two roles being performed by the same actor. For instance, Harold Jenkins in the New Arden *Hamlet* writes, “Marcellus presumably doubled other roles” (Shakespeare 1982, p. 20).

¹²³ This is the case with the performance under review. Critics almost unanimously explain the role multiplication as having an economical motive; although they also try to make sense of it in terms of the play as a whole. As Zábrádi says, “Gyanítom, hogy inkább spórolás, mint koncepció a sok összevonás” [I suspect that the large number of multiplications is rather a case of saving than (directorial) concept] (2003, p. 27). Zappe is also uncertain about the multiplications, “Nem tudni, vajon koncepció, mondandó van-e bennük, vagy pusztán spórolás” [One doesn’t know whether it is part of a scheme, it means to say something, or it is a mere saving on expenses] (2003b).

¹²⁴ Some of György Spiró’s (born 1946) work can be read in English translation. His 1985 play *Az imposztor*, is translated as *The Impostor* by Judith Sollosy (1992). Two of his short stories – translated by Eszter Molnár under the titles “Forest” and “Utopia” – were published in the collection entitled *Thy Kingdom Come* (1998, pp. 153-177).

programme thus turns out to be no more than an attempt at legitimising the principle itself. As Spiró argues,

A szerepösszevonások mélyén az a meggyőződés munkál, miszerint egy előadáson belül két vagy több egymástól eltérő – rokon jellegű, vagy akár egymás végletes ellentéteit képező – szerep azért játszatható azonos színésszel, mert e szerepekben van valami közös.

[At the heart of role multiplication there is a conviction at work, according to which two or more different roles that are akin or even extreme opposites of one another – can be cast for the same actor, because there is something in common within these roles.] (1997, p. 267)

Spiró traces the practice of doubling back to the medieval morality plays, and is convinced that Shakespeare and his contemporaries used this English custom. However, he does not have much proof for this; he can only explain that multiplication can work in every Shakespeare play, since there are a number of characters who do not meet each other on stage.

After Shakespeare's day, the strategy appears in the second part of Goethe's *Faust* and is a principle of the *mise-en-scène* in Imre Madách's *Az ember tragédiája* [*The Tragedy of Man*]. It permeates Wyspiański's theatre (*The Wedding* and *November Night*); and in his book on *Hamlet*, he anticipates the findings of later studies on role multiplication in the play (cf. Spiró 1997, pp. 270-275).¹²⁵ In the case of the mature Chekhov, Spiró refers to the concept of doubling in a metaphorical sense:

Ennek a szemléletnek a végsőig hajtása egy egészen másfajta drámatípust is eredményezhet. Ez a típus arra épít, hogy ugyan az előadásban nincs kettőzés; minden szerepet külön színész játszik, a dráma azonban arról szól, hogy *minden szerep azonos*. Másképpen fogalmazva: *minden színpadra állított alaknak azonos a központi életproblémája*, emiatt aztán egymással többnyire fel is cserélhetők, de ha nem, akkor is egymás variációi.

[Taking this theory to the extremes can result in a completely different type of

¹²⁵ Spiró also mentions Witkewicz, Mrożek, Gombrowicz (*The Wedding*), and Bulgakov (*Ivan the Terrible*) in this context. Taking a broader sense of the term, Spiró also lists instances of role multiplication from other genres or media, such as the novel (Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and *The Heart of a Dog*), poetry (Pessoa's four alter egos), and film (Miklós Jancsó's *Szegénylegények* and Fellini's *Satyricon*) (Spiró 1997, pp. 275-276).

drama. This type builds on the condition that even though there is no doubling in the performance (every individual role is acted by a different actor), the play itself is about every role being identical. In other words, *all figures on stage have the same cardinal problem in their lives*. This is the reason they are even replaceable by one another, or at least they are variations of one another.] (1997, p. 263, my emphasis)

Spiró attempts to provide a link between role multiplication used by different playwrights. He finds that the common trait between Elizabethan and Chekhovian drama is that they are both anthropological.¹²⁶

One might argue with the view that this strategy can only be seen as characteristic of certain authors. In fact, playwrights usually do not include staging directions recommending role multiplication. Even if this is suggested by the text, a director and his cast can perform the play differently. Role multiplication is much more to do with directorial style (for instance, it is rather characteristic of Max Stafford-Clarke's signature), and in that sense, almost any play can be subject to role multiplication. Obviously, there are exceptions to the 'rule', such as the playwright Caryl Churchill, who includes in some of her playtexts her directions for the doubling of certain roles. Such examples tend to be contemporary rather than from the time of Shakespeare. Nevertheless, directors do have the freedom to go against this, since they are co-creating new artworks with the aid of the playtext, amongst other constituents. This performance is not a unique instance of this practice in Hungary; the recent adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* (*A hárpia megzabolázása, avagy a makrancos hölgy*, 2003 dir. László Keszég) at Madách Kamara, Budapest, which was

¹²⁶ Az Erzsébet és Jakab kori dráma a színházi gyakorlat által garantált módon a kevés színész - sok szerep, a csehovi dráma a számára adott színházban lehetséges módon a sok színész - egy szerep megoldást kínálja. [Elizabethan and Jacobean drama offered the 'few actors – many roles' combination, due to contemporaneous theatre practice. Chekhovian drama offers the 'many actors – one role' combination, true to the theatre this kind of drama is based on.] (1997, p. 270)

based on Nádasdy's translation, also used role multiplication in minor roles.¹²⁷

In the performance directed by Hargitai the most justifiable multiplication appears to be the roles of Hamlet's father and the Player King being performed by the same actor. This is the only multiplication which overlaps with Spiró's system. This is not without any precedence in Hungary. Spiró in the last chapter of his book cites Tamás Ascher's aforementioned Kaposvár *Hamlet* as an example from the Hungarian stage history of *Hamlet*. A more recent example is Gábor Tompa's 1987 *Hamlet* in the Transylvanian city of Kolozsvár (Cluj), in which the same actor, Endre Senkálzsky delivered the ghost as well as the Player King – wearing a Shakespeare mask for both, thereby interrelated, roles. The character is 'crucified' by Claudius after the mousetrap scene; to be more precise, he is in the position of the crucified Christ when the setting behind him collapses and buries him. In Tompa's performance a set of traditions associated with the father figure was demolished by Claudius's dictatorship (reminiscent of that of Nicolae Ceaușescu), alongside whatever Shakespeare as a prototype represented (theatre, poetry, art, the freedom of expression, and so on). This exemplifies the Transylvanian allegorical manner of expression (*képes beszéd*) widespread amongst suppressed Hungarian intellectuals at the time. This 'survival strategy' was very common in the theatre, where censorship could be tricked more easily than in print.

In the Tompa production György Barkó was the (main) gravedigger, while under Hargitai's direction he performs the ghost (or the distinctly tangible father), the Player King and the gravedigger.¹²⁸ The latter attachment to the combination of roles

¹²⁷ Spiró's influence as a tutor at the Hungarian actor-training university (where directors also receive their education) needs to be noted; Hargitai's casting might be due to Spiró's inspiration as a teacher.

¹²⁸ Barkó excels at turning minor roles into great performances; a recent example is his appearance in Béla Tarr's widely celebrated arthouse film from 2000: *Werckmeister harmóniák* (*Werckmeister Harmonies*).

is less fortunate, even though one can read into it some continuity between death-related and art-related figures in the performance. As a gravedigger he is obviously associated with death, just as the father figure is, and owing to his talk, rich in wordplay, he can also be considered – along with the Player King – in the context of what the performance has to say about art and theatre.

The other cases of multiplication are less pragmatic. There is some similarity between Laertes being slightly exasperated by Ophelia's love, and the immensely bored Second Player (later on performing the roles of Prologue speaker and Lucianus) grinning and making faces at Hamlet's enthusiasm. Still, this might not be sufficient justification for the role multiplication. It is mildly ironic that the actor who played a rather careless father in Polonius's role later on provides the uncompassionate priest too, whose vocation is questioned by Laertes, the concerned sibling (a double irony). Kenneth Branagh's film *Hamlet*, which featured a rather priestlike, authoritarian and pontificating Polonius, may have been an inspiration for this.¹²⁹ It is also the Polonius-priest actor who appears as the taciturn companion (to the gravedigger) in the Pécs production, whose main concern is not to get his coat dirty when the gravedigger, explaining the nature of Ophelia's death, places it on the ground to signify water. Selfishness, conceit, and egocentrism can provide linkage between these roles for the same actor.

The actors playing Rosencrantz (Ádám Ottlik) and Guildenstern (Tibor Urbán) are also given a number of minor roles. The Rosencrantz actor also delivers Marcellus, Voltmand, a Messenger and finally, Fortinbras. The actor playing Guildenstern is also assigned to impersonate Bernardo, Cornelius and Osric, whose

¹²⁹ For a detailed reading of Polonius in Branagh's film see Rutter 2001, p. 47.

foppishness is completely lost due to the severe cutting of his lines. The roles the two actors are performing before their appearances as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are less disturbing, because – being lesser, almost negligible roles – they are likely to be easily forgotten by the viewer. It is instead the ‘reincarnation’ after the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that sets one’s mind working. It is potentially ironic that at the end of the performance Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who embody mediocrity in this performance, ‘remain’ on the stage metaphorically. They continue as a stage presence in the form of Fortinbras and the English ambassador. It is only they who remain on stage at the very end of the performance, since Horatio collapses at the order for “[t]he soldier’s music and the right of war”.¹³⁰ In their case the triumph of mediocrity can be a connotation behind the multiplication.¹³¹ One may then wonder if the personal traits carried by these roles make up the character, and thus, very much in the vein of medieval morality plays (from whence the practice of doubling possibly derives), we see mediocrity on stage in different ‘guises’, or it is indeed different characters played by the same actor, yet there may be a common denominator between their personal characteristics.

There is a new character, too, who is not part of any of the Shakespearean versions of the text. This character is an utterly nonverbal addition to the playtext, another instance of translation in the texture of the performance. In the scenes where the theme of death is important (and there are indeed a few of these), for instance, during Hamlet’s first soliloquy, in which he ponders on the prohibition of suicide,

¹³⁰ In Nádasdy’s translation: “Gyászzené és katonai tiszteletadás kísérje útján” [Let funeral music and military salutation accompany him on his journey] (Shakespeare 2003, p. 89).

¹³¹ Parenthetically, Peter Brook, in his recent French-speaking production of *Hamlet*, doubles the roles of Polonius and a gravedigger (Habib Dembélé dit Guimba), triples Guildenstern with the Second Player and Laertes (Rachid Djaidani), as well as Rosencrantz with the Second Player and a gravedigger (Bruce Myers). (This observation is based on viewing the performance at Warwick Arts Centre, and on the programme notes.)

there appears a wordless woman on stage, clad in black, as a *Leitmotif* of death. Unfortunately, the role is performed by the same actress who delivers the Player Queen (Ágnes Tádits, a member of the theatre's choir, who obviously cannot be taxed with this rather illogical choice of doubling). The reviewer Tamás Liszka does not realise that this seems to be a separate role. He expresses his failure to understand why the Player Queen is lazing against one of the boxes during the last scenes. (This again underlines that it is not enough to watch a performance once when it comes to reviewing it; re-viewing a performance in the literal sense is just as crucial as rereading in literary terms for analytical purposes.) Yet, can anything be accidental in a performance? Even the tiniest detail may shape the reading or deciphering of the production. This instance reminds me of a review of the 1972 Kecskemét *Hamlet* by the accomplished theatre critic Péter Molnár Gál (under his penname: M. G. P.), where he wittily finds faults with the actor playing Rosencrantz leaving his wedding ring on for the performance:

A színész viselhet gyűrűt, Rosencrantz nem. Ha viseli, meg kell magyaráznia, miért hordja, hogyan került az ujjára: el kell játszani, el kell hitetni, meg kell indokolni a gyűrűt. Mert a színházban nincsen olyan lényegtelennek látszó, olyan aprócska mozzanat, ami elhanyagolható volna. [...] Egy kicsiny részlet megindítja a néző képzeletét. Vagy más irányba tereli.

[The actor may wear a ring, but Rosencrantz should not. If he wears it, he has to explain why he is wearing it, how it ended up on his finger: he has to act it out, make it believable, account for it. Since in the theatre there is not a single minute and unimportant instance that could be neglected. Even a tiny detail can set the viewer's imagination going, or guide it in another direction.] (1972)

This critique underlines the importance of every single particle of the composite language of a performance. Inconsistency drives the viewer to contemplating if the actor steps in and out of role on purpose, and how such a strategy may relate to the performance as a whole. As argued above, in some cases there is a logical link between different roles taken by the same actor, or different roles amalgamated into

the same character (depending on perspective). On the other hand, in most cases, Spiró's second definition of multiplication (or, in his term, contraction) would apply, that is, the one pertinent to modern drama, where all roles can be seen as one and the same. If one accepts the relevance of this, more open-minded, definition, it is also apparent that it has more to do with the style of the director than with the intention of the author of the 'original'. This view would also highlight the status of the translator as author of the translation, since it was most probably his modern-language version that inspired the role multiplication.

A multimedia event

Reba Gostand's insight about translation into the media of television and film can apply to performances too, especially when they are markedly multimedia events. Even though her statement reflects on the benefit of camera and editing techniques, it is germane here:

[S]ymbols can be stressed, patterns can be underlined by montage effects to bring out relationships, or to juxtapose characters, scenes or events in order to manipulate audience response or communicate different facets of experience. (Gostand 1980, p. 6)

The visual sequences for the background screening of the Pécs performance were designed by Csaba Kocsis and Titusz Pázmány. The material is *dulce et utile* at the same time: the delectable series of visual effects is rich in allusions that facilitate the understanding of the performance. The projected imagery is an integral part of most scenes, rather than mere illustration, although towards the end of the performance it seems to have lost some of its force and coherence. The technique of using multimedia effects is a hallmark of the director, and one reviewer notes that in this

production the background screening is not as integrated as it was in his 2001 *Liaisons Dangereuses* (cf. Nagy 2003). The video sequences and images facilitate a hypertextual viewing of the performance with innumerable variations of live performance and electronic picture. In this hypertext there are two main nodes: what is happening onstage and what is on the projector. The spectator is provided with a number of links; it is hardly possible to pursue all of them. As Jakob Nielsen explains the concept,

Hypertext presents several different options to the readers, and the individual reader determines which of them to follow at the time of reading the text. This means that the author of the text has set up a number of alternatives for readers to explore rather than a single stream of information. (1990, pp. 1-2)

Here, however, we are not concerned with a verbal text only, nor is it a case of one ‘author’. Indeed, a production implies a team; authorship is divided between a number of theatre-makers. Nevertheless, ‘reading’ such a performance text is very similar to what Nielsen describes above: it is a fast-moving activity of selection and combination.

Some of the images may serve as a *Leitmotif* introducing the appearance of a character. The ghost’s video *Leitmotif* is the *Tetragrammaton*. Liszka links this to Shakespeare’s alleged connection with Freemasonry (2003, p. 6). Even if someone does not identify the Tetragrammaton, one can see that the sign consists of circles and triangles – symbols of transcendence – referring to the otherworldly nature of the character. The intertext works differently for different receivers depending on how they identify it. Hamlet himself has a *Leitmotif* in the form of the graphic image of a pistol moving in and out of the screen. (The *Leitmotif* is not so consistently used as in the case of old Hamlet.)

Some of the sequences have a clear, straightforward connection to the spoken text. For instance, there is a short visual sequence featuring soldiers and other war images projected, while the royal couple listens to the messengers' report. During Ophelia's distribution of 'flowers' the background screen displays a meadow with flowers in it. Another integrated image, or rather, image sequence, is when, on Laertes's return, one sees his emergent picture, first in a full-size close-up, then in four smaller ones, and then gradually in smaller and smaller images. It is as if the multiplication or proliferation of images were to translate Claudius's remark into the performance: "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, / But in battalions" (IV/5; 78-79). (This passage is actually missing from this script but familiar to all in Arany's translation.)¹³² This screening begins before he appears to speak to Claudius.

Other images have an importance that is more global than local in the production as they form 'image clusters' or provide links to other points in the performance. The initial sequence – in the manner of a visual prologue – portrays the fall of a huge tree, symbolising the death of old Hamlet. During the great soliloquy, when Hamlet ponders on the possibility of suicide (even mimes cutting his veins), some of these pictures are shown again – providing another recurrent motif in the performance.

An expanded and extended sequence of the performance – one of an imaginary reception or ball – starts off before the first court scene (in which Laertes gets permission to leave for France and Hamlet is persuaded to stay on). Pictures of illustrious representatives of the world of Western protocol – celebrities such as

¹³² For various translations of the sentence see Appendix One item 17.

Kristin Scott Thomas, Pierce Brosnan (with a ‘Bond girl’), the Beckhams,¹³³ Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles – appear on the screen. All of these images are set into the background of a luxurious palace hall. The images of these familiar faces are interspersed with images of the characters raising or clinking their glasses at the same reception; in fact, it is Gertrude’s face that one first notices on the screen. (This is even before the character herself appears on stage, so it is only in retrospect, when re-viewing the performance, that one can appreciate the importance of this.) The fiction built up by this device is that we are right in the middle of the reception celebrating Claudius’s ascension to the throne and his marriage to Gertrude. This sequence prepares the atmosphere for the actual arrival of the royal couple on the scene; the ‘film still’ of the arched hall (now without figures) remains projected on the wall when the first court scene begins (and is populated again, for instance, when a recorded applause is played after the announcement of Claudius’s new decisions, and when the guests are shown dancing while Hamlet is asked to stop mourning for his father). The image of this exquisite hall provides a major background to forthcoming stage events.

Some of them may challenge trends of interpretation from the reception history of *Hamlet*. When Polonius reads out to Claudius and Gertrude Hamlet’s awkward poem written to Ophelia, the young lovers are shown in close-up on the back projection, reaching for a kiss in the midst of a beautiful natural landscape. Behind them one can discern the face of Polonius, wearing spectacles. This instance recalls Celestino Coronado’s ‘naked Hamlet’ (1977), which centralises Polonius’s

¹³³ The Beckhams have a deliberately constructed ‘royal’ image around them. For instance, at their wedding they were sitting on thrones, wearing crowns. The media often refers to their home as *Beckingham Palace*, and so on. Hungarians are familiar with at least some of this cult.

peeping. Looking has also been identified as a master metaphor of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (Rutter 2001, p. 55). This might also be seen as an intertext of the Pécs performance. This same video installation may also give the curious viewer some direction as to whether Hamlet has slept with Ophelia – an evergreen question of *Hamlet* criticism. However, as the scene is romantic rather than erotic, the performance does not offer a ready-made answer to whether their passion was consummated or not. This instance in the performance can also be seen as a stylistic intertext, referring to a flashback of Hamlet and Ophelia's love-making in Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* film (1996), which informs the viewer of the nature of their relationship. Edward Eaton points out that Branagh's film answers this question leaving no doubt in the viewer (1999, p. 54). Here we witness how far-reaching the influence of Shakespeare films can be on performances. Small wonder that the most successful and lucrative branch of the Shakespeare industry – the movies – leave a mark on the work of theatre-makers too.

When the king and the queen leave Polonius alone with Hamlet, the image of Polonius's head crops up on the left hand side of the screen (this is the direction the royal couple took to exit) emphasising that he stays on with a specific 'mission'. This links to the previous image of the inquisitive, watchful Polonius. As a continuation of this, a humorous and inventive sequence accompanies the preparation of the nunnery scene. The layout of the setting appears on the screen, together with the heads of Gertrude, Claudius, Polonius and Ophelia, in accordance with their order of appearance in this scene. The heads are gradually disappearing from the screen as the characters exit. First they send Gertrude out, then Claudius and Polonius take their hiding places, and it is only Ophelia who remains onstage, reading in the front right hand corner while Hamlet is speaking his great soliloquy. The heads of the two

eavesdroppers appear every now and again on the screen during the nunnery scene. This provides the punchline for this visual joke. During the nunnery scene, there is another, though less clearly motivated sequence screened about the perishing of a doll or effigy. This invites various interpretations: it may be referring to the loss of the possibility of a child for the couple; it may also indicate the shattering of Hamlet's puerile, unconditional trust in Ophelia. Both readings can be justified, since Hamlet arguably loses faith in Ophelia in this scene.

When Polonius leaves after testing Hamlet's sanity (II/2 in the playtext), a stylised, impersonal drawing of a human figure comes up on the screen. It has a few circles around the pectoral area, as if it were a dartsboard. Hamlet takes his gun, and shoots at it several times. The shots are indicated as dots around the circles. He moves his gun towards the right, and gets ready to shoot, but that is the moment he realises Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are arriving. At the beginning of Hamlet's conversation with the two of them the image of a pistol is moved in and out on the screen, against the backdrop of the palace interior.

During the mousetrap scene we see the members of the stage audience in pre-recorded close-ups, being bored, surprised, agitated, and so on. These pictures are not coordinated with the faces the actors are making on the stage when the sequence is shown (except, for instance, in Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's case, who are immensely bored; they are sipping drinks noisily, and Rosencrantz's mobile phone rings). Most of the actors do not even attempt to make the same facial gestures on the stage as on the recording. Thus, the viewer assumes this is intentional. In the case of some characters, most typically Claudius, the sequence illustrates what could be taking place in his psyche. As a character on stage, Claudius is very disciplined, he

succeeds in covering up his anxiety, while the video material betrays his turmoil.¹³⁴ If the performance were to emphasise the metatheatrical aspect, faces from the ‘ordinary’ audience could be shown, too.¹³⁵ However, this kind of auto-mirroring was a principle dominating the *mise-en-scène* of *[kamera.man]* (1999, Debrecen, dir. István Pinczés), and a varied repetition of the same technique might come across as less than innovatory reminiscence. The European stage history of *Hamlet* records at least one ‘media *Hamlet*’, namely Hansgunther Heyme’s 1979 *Hamlet*, which had eighteen monitors on stage (cf. Hapgood 1999, p. 81). This should certainly not be a barrier for Hungarian directors of *Hamlet* if they wish to experiment with the metatheatrical aspect of the play in a more pronouncedly mediated way, partly because the Hungarian audience is not familiar with this performance, and partly because metatheatricality can be addressed in a variety of ways. However, this performance of *Hamlet* does not reinforce any strands of interpretations from the reception history of *Hamlet*. It offers a cleverly shortened abridgement, which leaves you with a sense of wholeness.

Let us examine one further example of how the screened images form a hypertextual link to the spoken text. When Hamlet talks of “this goodly frame the earth” (II/2; 298), the globe is shown in the background (while the beginning of the ‘Minuet’ from Händel’s “Music for the Royal Fireworks” is being played). This is a pun using the polysemic and connotative ambiguities of the Hungarian noun *föld*, meaning ‘earth’ as well as ‘globe’. The pun works on the verbal as well as the visual and physical levels, as Hamlet also caresses Rosencrantz’s head while he is saying

¹³⁴ Claudius’s face in the sequence is rather reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock’s face. This incidental intertext conjures up the associations of sharpness of mind combined with ruthless plotting.

¹³⁵ For a detailed discussion *Hamlet* as a metaplay see Abel 1963 and Calderwood 1983.

“ez a remek alkotmány, a Föld csak kopár hegyfoknak tűnik” [this fine creation, the earth/globe only appears a barren mountain top] (Shakespeare 2003, p. 30).

At the beginning of the second part, the background screening starts off with Hamlet using a remote control. This is a clever device for two reasons: his procrastination in front of the screen provides continuity with the end of the previous part when he was troubled about his vocation, and now, as a coping mechanism, he tries to get away from the ‘real world’ with the aid of the television; it involves the video installation in the action itself, making it more integrated. The background screen thus overtly features as a television screen now, which is another example of the multifunctionality of the props, and, in general, the signs in the performance. As he plays with the remote, snippets of different programmes, such as the news, one of the popular afternoon talk shows of the time (*Claudia*), a few filmic images, a cartoon, and so on, flash up on the screen for a few moments.

Conclusion

Fischer-Lichte emphasises that the makers of an individual production are in charge of the performance as an artefact, and may be inspired by other works as opposed to being bound by their main source:

Actors or directors can of course draw on different dramatic texts or on any other sort of text as material if they wish to produce in the course of the performance some notion or idea, series of actions or forms of behavior, conviction or thought. In short, they want to generate a meaning that does not arise from a concrete dramatic text but stems from some other textual complex or context of life. (1992, p. 200)¹³⁶

What she aims at here is a kind of intertextuality in the theatre, even though she

¹³⁶ However, Fischer-Lichte’s notion of theatre-making in which everything seems to be disciplined, carefully and consciously planned out with adequately logical reasoning, does not allow for intertextual encounters that the makers may be unaware of, but some receivers may identify.

refrains from the term, which is persuasively used in a similar context by Fischlin and Fortier:

Theatrical adaptation is an intertextual apparatus, a system of relations and citations not only between verbal texts, but between singing and speaking bodies, lights, sounds, movements, and all other cultural elements at work in theatrical production. (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 7)

As Fischer-Lichte argues, “They [actors and directors] may then extract certain individual elements as set pieces from different dramatic texts in order to mount these at some random point in the performance in the context of specific functions” (1992, p. 200). In the case of the performance under scrutiny it is filmic or television intertexts (film *Hamlets*, especially Branagh’s, news programmes, talk shows, and so on) rather than references to other plays that are crucial to a possible reading – piecing together the performance text. However, as pointed out before, other literary or dramatic echoes (such as the Chekhovian or Brechtian style) may also be identified, depending on the viewer.

There is a strong intertextual connection with the film *Meet Joe Black* (1997), directed by Martin Brest.¹³⁷ The fact itself that some important action takes place against the backdrop of a social function is strongly reminiscent of *Meet Joe Black*, where the action leads up to the 65th birthday party of the protagonist, William Parish (Anthony Hopkins), who is visited by death incarnate in Joe Black (Brad Pitt). The way the unghostly father walks up to Hamlet recalls the scene where the mysterious visitor, later to be named Joe Black, addresses and then discloses himself as a flesh-and-blood figure to Bill in the library of the residence. The difference is that here the old and familiar deceased person visits the young family member, while in Brest’s

¹³⁷ Tamás Liská mentions the reference to *Joe Black* in his review (2003, p. 6). Despite the fact that if one carefully compares the two artefacts, there appears to be no direct borrowing – that is, a sequence copied from the film – the performance is still undoubtedly reminiscent of the film.

modern version of the *danse macabre*, death takes the flesh of a recently deceased young man utterly unfamiliar to Bill. Like 'Joe Black', old Hamlet does not entirely 'blend in', either (as Joe put it in the film); they are human and otherworldly at the same time.

At least since the late 1940s critics have argued how theatrical cinema was in its early days, especially with regard to the close-up, fade-in/fade-out, and the static nature of scenes. A. Nicholas Vardac would actually call nineteenth-century theatre proto-cinematic: "attempting to be cinematic without the appropriate technology" (Brewster and Jacobs 1997 cited Auslander 1999, p. 12).¹³⁸ In the case of the current performance the focus is the other way around: on how much theatre learnt from cinema. After books like *Stage to Screen* (Vardac 1949) and *Theatre to Cinema* (Brewster 1997) one can also argue for a strong line of influence in the opposite direction: how theatre is mediatised, impregnated with techniques borrowed from the screen. Auslander, referring to Pavis, claims that such "attenuated incursion of media technology" (Auslander 1999, p. 25) in the theatre is often there to satisfy a need for realism (induced by the electronic media).¹³⁹ However, in this production it has more to do with the heterogeneity and multireferentiality of postmodernism; these part-visual hypertexts and complex image clusters lend themselves to a postmodernist reading. However, the uncertainty about the code in Hargitai's – perhaps even too polyphonic and heterogeneous – performance does not facilitate a unified and coherent interpretation. The dramaturgy highlights the linearity about the artefact, the video installation renders it close to what Fischer-Lichte conceptualises as global translation, and the fact itself that three subtexts have proven crucial to the skeleton

¹³⁸ For a brief summary of the relevant scholarly material see Auslander 1999, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁹ For more detail on theatre replicating media see Auslander 1999, pp. 24-25.

of the performance underlines the relevance of structural translation to a great extent. This internal imbalance of the performance is an idea confirmed by one of its makers. As Béla Stenczer (Polonius) remarks in an interview,

Erőteljes, markáns térkompozícióban játszottunk, ami önálló műalkotásként érvényesül. Van egy erős multimédiás háttér, mint kettes számú műalkotás, és mellesleg zajlik egy Shakespeare-dráma is, amit színészek próbálnak eljátszani. [We were playing in a markedly composed setting, which can be considered an artefact in itself. There is a strong multimedia background as a secondary artefact, and incidentally there is a Shakespeare play happening too, which actors try to play.] (Gelencsér 2003, p. 15)

Given that the ‘subtexts’ are in an unresolved relationship with one another and with the whole of the performance, the Pécs *Hamlet* seems to rule out the possibility of any consistent readings, despite signposting several generic readings, including the drama of quest, the detective story, the ghost story. Overall, the performance invites a postmodernist reading, which addresses the heterogeneous nature of the performance. This puzzles some of the reviewers, who might have expected the production to help them construct a meaning. For example, Zábrádi mentions two main contexts in which *Hamlet* has been interpreted so far, and demands that the performance reinforces one or the other of these readings:

Hogy a pécsi előadás a Hamlet társadalmi drámai vonalát, vagy inkább a személyes, emberi tragédiát hivatott inkább kiemelni, arra talán megvan a válasz, kizárásos alapon. Bár a szövegben sokat beszélnek országos gondokról, a nép/udvar/polgárok/emberek/tömegek - költségkímélés, helyhiány miatt - nem jelennek meg. A gonosz hatalmi jelenlét Claudius egyszemélyes terhe, ezért bátorodom arra következtetni, hogy itt az individuum igazi lét, nem lét problémája kerül inkább boncasztalra.

[The question whether the performance at Pécs emphasises the social drama about *Hamlet* or rather the personal human tragedy can perhaps be answered, because one of the options can be ruled out. Even though they speak a lot about the troubles in the country, the people/court/city-dwellers/crowds do not appear – because of a shortage of funds and space. The presence of wicked authority is solely Claudius’s burden; this is why I dare to say that it is rather the real problems of existence and nonexistence that are under scrutiny here.] (Zábrádi 2003, p. 26)

The fact that the visual code seems to be overdomineering in the performance is not a unique phenomenon in our day. There seems to be a trend in contemporary theatre and accompanying criticism where one can detect a shift of focus from actor and director towards setting, costume, lighting and other visual aspects. As Ralph Berry puts it, “In the past, critics reviewed actors; more recently, directors. Today one reviews the designer” (Berry 1989 cited Rutter 2001, p. 104). Carol Chillington Rutter traces this practice back to the 1960s, at least in Britain:

Since the 1960s the design style that has come to dominate at the RSC as designers have moved away from consistency and scenic decoration toward non-illusion is what the theatre critic Michael Billington calls ‘eclecticism’, design for a post-modern stage that works by pastiche to deconstruct the notion of the self-contained playworld. Eclectic design mixed fantasy with realism, nostalgia with the avant-garde; the play becomes a palimpsest of its previous productions. (2001, p. 107)

With reference to this particular case study it is the performance itself that becomes the palimpsest of other productions and reworkings ‘of’ the play. This is not to deny that the playtext is also a palimpsest, but in this context the palimpsest-aspect of theatre performance is more pertinent. Dennis Kennedy’s term *neo-pictorialism* (which he associates with Robin Phyllips, Liviu Ciulei, Adrian Noble, Ron Daniels, Michael Bogdanov, JoAnne Akalaitis and others) sufficiently describes this visuality-centred performance.¹⁴⁰ Liviu Ciulei’s words, accompanying his direction of *The Tempest* (1981), could be relevant to a critically benevolent reading of the Pécs production:

In our time, more than ever before, the traditional and the new coexist, creating an eclectic landscape of forms. Our own style has not yet crystallized, but is rather an in-gathering of a variety of styles. Thus the setting, costumes and acting styles of this production are deliberately eclectic. (1981 cited Kennedy 2001, p. 291)

¹⁴⁰ For a detailed discussion of neo-pictorialism see Kennedy 2001, pp. 287-302.

This production is an instance of *Gesamtkunst* with *Leitmotifs*, bringing together different arts, abounding in nonverbal and verbal constituents (in this order of importance). This example of intersemiotic translation has demonstrated that translation, even on an intersemiotic level, is a complex, multi-layered intertextual phenomenon, where not only the main ‘source text’ (Nádasdy’s translation with dramaturgy by Győző Duró) informs the ‘translation’ (the Pécs production) and its reception, but numerous other intertexts, including other work by the makers of the performance, other reworkings of Shakespeare’s play, as well as intertexts seemingly ‘independent’ from *Hamlet*.

PART THREE

Intracultural Translation and Beyond

“The mighty dead return, but they return in our colours, and speaking in our voices, at least in part, at least in moments, moments that testify to our persistence, and not to their own.” (Bloom 1973, p. 141)

Introduction

The collection of texts selected for the discussion of the Hungarian translation of *Hamlet* from the perspective of what Roman Jakobson termed intralingual translation represents an assortment of genres and styles. This part of the thesis also exemplifies different attitudes to ‘translation’ as rewriting. These instances are more than simply “rewordings”, there is a great deal of creative intertextuality about them, which can be described with the trope of translation. For the sake of a more complete overall picture, all the three traditional generic classes are included: drama (Chapter One), fiction (Chapter Two) and poetry (Chapter Three). This allows us to examine different approaches to rewriting both in terms of the selection of material and the manner and foci of the presentation of the reimagined aspects of *Hamlet*.

Firstly, let us explore a few typologies of cultural reworking – for the sake of theoretical inspiration if not as strict guidelines. These types will be mainly exemplified with reference to Hungarian cultural artefacts where possible and applicable. Chantal Zabus (2002) does not provide a systematic taxonomy of rewrites, yet one can distinguish various tendencies from the introduction to *Tempests after Shakespeare*. She emphasises that rewrites tend to give voice to characters who do not have enough chance to have their say (obviously, from the perspective of the rewriter). This includes mere quantitative changes in comparison with the ‘original’: simply giving more lines to certain characters.

One may exemplify this with reference to Pozsgai's and Niklai's dramatic rewrites, which develop Horatio as a central character.¹⁴¹ Another recurrent feature concerns the exposure of the 'source' to ideological intervention, recovering "repressed" palimpsest layers (2002, p. 2). This characteristic may be seen as contributing to the palimpsest status of 'the text'. Margaret Atwood's "Gertrude Talks Back" (1993) and Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) would rank here as texts recontextualising the marriage of old Hamlet and Gertrude. In Updike's work, this was an arranged marriage into which Gertrude was forced. Atwood in this monologue gives voice to a character who is silenced in the play as far as her past is concerned. Gertrude, as reimagined by Atwood, was not in the least attracted to old Hamlet. "These 'alter-native' plots serve to dismantle narrative authority and to reorient the circulation of knowledge" (Zabus 2002, p. 3). Continuing with the metaphors inherited from literary hermeneutics and reader response criticism, gaps only exist if one perceives them; much depends on the rewriter/translator-as-interpreter in this respect.

Douglas Lanier in his work *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* prudently offers some 'possibilities' rather than categories for the discussion of this type of translation (2002, p. 83). In this *quasi*-typology, **extrapolated narratives** fill in gaps; such a text explores relationships not pursued by Shakespeare (for instance, the addition of the flirtation between Guildenstern and the Gertrude figure in Juhász's *Hamlet* novel and that of Horatio's infatuation with Ophelia in Niklai's *Horatio*). Steven Berkoff in his 2001 play *The Secret Love Life of Ophelia* focuses solely on the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia, exposing some other fragments of the 'original' plot (for instance, Polonius showing the couple's correspondence to the king) in the light of this relationship. **Remotivated narratives** feature characters from the 'source' with

¹⁴¹ The present author is grateful to Dr István Rác for drawing her attention to Niklai's play.

altered traits or motives, while keeping the plotline of the original. (This type is the most difficult to exemplify, because all Hungarian rewrites modify the plot to some extent.) To a certain degree Bereményi's (born 1946) play *Halmi vagy a tékozló fiú* [Halmi, or The Prodigal Son] (1979) belongs here, where the titular character is disinclined to perform any deeds for humankind, for his immediate environment, or even for himself. His motivations – if he has any – are certainly different from those of the Shakespearean character (at least, according to the strand of interpretation that sees him as a larger-than-life saviour figure).

Reoriented narratives give a different perspective on an event or a series of events. In Gere's (born 1949) *Egérfogó: Rítus and rögtönzés* [Mousetrap: Ritual and Improvisation] (premiered in 1995 in Veszprém) we see the Mousetrap from the perspective of the players. Gere's Hamlet leaves the body of the deceased Polonius with the unsuspecting actors (claiming that Polonius is only asleep), wanting them to take the blame for his murder. In Csaba Kiss's (born 1960) play *Hazatérés Dániába* [Homecoming to Denmark] Hamlet's return from Wittenberg is shown in a new light. Gáspár's socialist rewrite condemns the father figure as a harmful idol. In part, most rewrites belong here, at least partially. **Interpolated narratives** fuse new plot material with that of the source. The majority of rewrites engage in such an activity; for example, Juhász's novel introduces a subplot in which Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet an American family in London, they exchange views on Europe, the two alleged friends flirt with the two young girls of the family, and so on. **Revisionary narratives** are 'new' stories with the same characters and basic situation, yet a different plot. Sárközi's play and Bereményi's *Halmi* can be examples. Lanier also identifies **crossover hybrids** as a type; this blends different plays. Hungarian rewrites do not abound in such elements; however, it often happens that certain characters or instances of

the plot are reminiscent of other plays; for example, Bumbala in Géza Juhász's novel may recall the character of Caliban. One might, with some liberty, extend this 'type' to include the insertion of other historical figures, such as contemporaries of Shakespeare, in a rewrite. István Gere, for instance, turns the actors William Kempe and Nathan Field into characters of his play. Kempe's – probably fictitious – wife, Liza, is also a member of the company. She is proud that her beauty drags crowds of spectators to the spectacles.

It is very difficult to tell these categories apart in practice, many of these features appear in the same rewrite-as-translation; for instance, it may be extrapolated, revisionary and remotivated at the same time. Lanier is primarily preoccupied with popular culture phenomena (often deemed as degraded or adulterated Shakespeare), yet his terms are useful in a wider context of Shakespeare rewritings (especially as one sees these as 'possibilities', characteristics of a reworking). It also needs stressing that these categories listed here are only the taxonomy he sets up for texts based on the plays themselves; he offers other categories for the reimaginings of Shakespeare's biography, for example.

Patsy Stoneman (1995), an expert on the reworking of texts by the Brontës, Elizabeth Gaskell and other women writers, examines instances of what she calls *incremental literature* (a term borrowed from Christoph Richards) along similar lines. There are texts that relate what happened before or after the story of the originating text (Niklai's *Horatio*, Pozsgai's *Horatio* or Abraham's *Hamlet*); others tell events missing from it or the story of a marginal figure. István Gere's *Egérfogó* would exemplify this, where, in a very Stoppardian fashion, the players are the main characters. Alternatively, the term *derivative* (as used by Stoneman) can employ a perspective entirely missing from its original; and it can also

demonstrate “the effects of pre-existing fictional texts in the real lives of later readers” (1995, p. 80). One may notice how Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (apparently in Arany’s translation) informs Gabi’s life and artistic work in Gáspár’s play.

Another example is Marcell Benedek’s novel *Hamlet tanár úr* [Professor Hamlet] from 1928, in which Gábor Szentpáli, the eponymous professor of literature, interprets his own solitude as a philosophically sensitive individual and as an intellectual in the context of Hamlet’s tragic isolation.¹⁴² In Szentpáli’s reading, Hamlet is by nature incapable of communication, of living among other people. He is not understood by any of the women in the court, including Ophelia. Kertész, a student of Szentpáli at the university, is writing his dissertation on the reception history of *Hamlet* (how different schools of criticism approached the tragic element of the play). His interpretation of Hamlet’s character is more political: Hamlet was born to be a ruler, and he is deprived of this by circumstances. Their readings – beside reinforcing different strands of *Hamlet* criticism – also represent generational differences: the young, agile, ambitious student envisages an essentially active and political, yet hindered Hamlet, while the lonely professor at the peak of his career understands with the aid of Hamlet’s tragedy what it means to be “singled out”. These are cases of reading oneself into *Hamlet*, and also being inspired by *Hamlet* in weaving one’s life narrative. A quintessential example of this, however, is Miklós Tóth-Máthé’s short story, which elucidates the topicality of the great soliloquy for a provincial Hungarian actor towards the end of the socialist era.

A related mode of rewriting-as-translation would be, though this is not part of Stoneman’s classification, the reworking of fragments of ‘the text’, for example, the great soliloquy, one of the focal scenes, aphorisms, and so on. This

¹⁴² Interestingly, the character of Szentpáli is said to have been modelled on Frigyes Riedl, one of the pioneers of Arany’s canonisation (discussed in Part One Chapter Two).

can also overlap with another possible ‘category’, that of motif-based intertextuality, which is frequent in poetry. It may be of importance whether one encounters a case of a systematic rewriting of *Hamlet* or simply a motif or line has been picked up from it. Examples of the latter abound in poetry, but other genres are not devoid of Shakespearean ‘instances’, either. There is a *Hamlet* performance mentioned in Rózsa Ignác’s (1909-1979) novel *Anyanyelve magyar* [Her Native Language: Hungarian] (1937), which is set in post-Trianon Kolozsvár. It is the experience of viewing the gravediggers’ scene that helps the heroine, Ilona Kovács, pass through her mourning process for those who died that year, and brings her catharsis. She is also challenged by this epiphany to reconsider her priorities and goals in life.

Arany’s solution for *he insolence of office* – another temporal exoticism originating in his ‘rendition’ of the great soliloquy – provided the title of a book on the pitfalls of bureaucracy. *A hivatalnak packázásai* [petty games of office life] (liberal translation) “[attacks] that unpleasant aspect of modern life” (1964, p. 91).

Fischlin and Fortier pithily summarise similar tendencies to those identified by Stoneman:

More recent playwrights, for instance, have written alternative plots or intercut the staging of a Shakespeare play with another plot. They have also written texts that precede or follow the Shakespearean source. (2000, p. 17)

There appears to be a sequels syndrome – a compulsion to ‘write beyond the ending’ (cf. DuPlessis 1985) – around *Hamlet*. One of the few sequels among Hungarian rewrites – beside Pozsgai’s play and Lengyel’s political satires – is an imaginary sixth act to *Hamlet* written by Nicolas Abraham, a French psychoanalyst of Hungarian origin. The play is entitled (in its Hungarian translation) *Hamlet selleme vagy a hatodik felvonás* [Hamlet’s Ghost, or The

Sixth Act]. The text, which was translated into Hungarian by a recent translator of *Hamlet* (György Jánosházy), was not written in Hungarian and the author is only partly Hungarian, so this is a text related to Hungarian culture rather than issuing from it.

It also seems to be an intriguing question whether a) the rewrite stays in (or close to) Shakespeare's period and culture in terms of narrated material (for example, Gere's *Egérfogó*, Niklai's *Horatio*), b) the action takes place in the rewriter's time (Tóth-Máthé's short story, and many other Hungarian rewrites), or c) it takes us into a different (usually historical) period (Gáspár in her *Hamlet* play seeks to heal the scars of the recent past). Reimagining *Hamlet* in the author's time usually results in an updating, a 'modernising' of the plot and the characters. For instance, in at least two twentieth-century Hungarian rewrites, Reynaldo has been translated into a private detective (Olaf Reynald in Juhász's novel and M. Hopsza in Sárközi's play). Pozsgai's play, though set in a Denmark under Fortinbras's leadership, also features detectives, who, with their various recourse to torture, are reminiscent of twentieth-century dictatorships.

The issue of historical correctness or 'fidelity' appears in some critical writing on texts that go back to a time preceding the author's. Patsy Stoneman complains about "failures of historical sensibility" (1995, p. 85) and the neglect of the "commonsense perspective" (Jackson 1981 cited Stoneman 1995, p. 87) in a number of sequels to nineteenth-century novels by women. Regarding the idiom itself, one might argue that it is impossible to recreate the language of an earlier period as authentic; such an imitated language can only be an *ersatz* version, and the question how worthwhile such experiments are is a valid one. Such an idiom will also be – even if inadvertantly – a reflection on the time when it is written. It may also work as a postmodernist enterprise, conscious of its own artificiality in

terms of style and possibly in terms of period *realia*. Such self-reflexivity would link the rewrite to what Linda Hutcheon (1988) describes as historiographic metafiction – or here, rather, metadrama. Most of the Hungarian rewrites do not stay in Shakespeare's period (apart from the plays by Gere and Niklai) but are situated in their author's day or another time between Shakespeare's and the rewriter's period. However, period miscellanea can still be important, as we will see in Juhász's novel, which reduces the period detail to its minutiae, such as card games played at the time. Another example is when Gabi in Margit Gáspár's play reads a work by the detective and adventure story writer Jenő Rejtő (that is the pseudonymous P. Howard).

Categorisational problems when assessing Shakespeare films present similar difficulties (though this is, strictly speaking, the area of intersemiotic translation). As Deborah Cartmell (2000) stresses, not all cases are *straight adaptations* (p. x). Cartmell provides us with a taxonomy borrowed from Geoffrey Wagner: a triad of *transposition*, *commentary* and *analogy* (2000, p. x). Jack Jorgens also offers a division between modalities of adaptation (Shaugnessy 1998, pp. 9-10). He exemplifies a theatrical adaptation (that is a filmic reworking that retains theatricality) with Olivier's *Othello*, which “attempts to preserve live performance on film” (Shaugnessy 1998, p. 9). In a realist adaptation, such as Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, settings, environment, period detail and spectacle are in the foreground. (Károly Esztergályos's 1984 small-screen version of *Hamlet* would belong here, on the basis of its reviews.) Jorgens describes a work as a filmic adaptation if it adds the special artistry of the medium of film. The work of the ‘film poet’ or ‘film artist’ (notions derived from *auteur* theory) is not supposed to be judged on the ground of faithfulness to the text, because s/he creates his/her own work. Undoubtedly, a very difficult category is represented by

the films that are loosely linked to Shakespeare, either reiterating the main plot, or utilising a situation, motif or character typical of a Shakespeare play. Roger Manvell terms the following *remote adaptations* (1971, p. xvi):

A few outstanding directors have used situations in the play as sources from which to draw either period or modern parallels for their screenplays – for example, Ernst Lubitsch in *To Be or not to Be* (1941), André Cayatte in *Les Amants de Vérone* (1948), Peter Ustinov in *Romanoff and Juliet* (1960), Robert Wise in the Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein and Arthur Laurents' musical *West Side Story* (1961), Claude Chabrol in *Ophélie* (1962) and Andrzej Wajda in *The Siberian Lady Macbeth* (1961). (1971, p. xv)

Manvell admits that there are overlapping cases such as Akira Kurosawa's *The Castle of the Spider's Web* (which Manvell cites as a 'version' of *Macbeth*). This argument seems to be similar to Jorgens's category of filmic adaptations. Even though it is difficult to classify them, these daring and quite independent reworkings of Shakespeare sometimes constitute a more illuminating subject of critical enquiry than schematic and often predictable adaptations.

Some films show an extract of a Shakespearean film, and let a character (or characters) react to it. This openly intertextual game based on the film-within-the-film technique appears in *Last Action Hero*, in which a character acted by Arnold Schwarzenegger watches a meditative Olivier as Hamlet, and opts for action (cf. Shaugnessy 1998, pp. 1-2 and Lanier 2002, pp. 44-45).

There are films that are connected to more than one Shakespearean play, such as Orson Welles's *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), which draws on *Henry IV*, Parts I and II, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Richard II* and *Henry V* when constructing a composite image of Falstaff. This parallels the category of crossover hybrids (Lanier 2002).¹⁴³ There are films in which parallels between Shakespearean characters and those in a given film can be drawn. Robert Manvell

¹⁴³ A related case in point is *Shakespeare in Love*, which cannot be called a strict adaptation of any of the plays, but stands in an intertextual relationship with both *Romeo and Juliet* (which is enacted in the film as a play-within-the-play device) and with *Twelfth Night* (through the motif of cross-dressing for the sake of being around the beloved).

stresses that “Buster Keaton believes he is playing Hamlet momentarily in his film *Day Dreams*” (1971, p. 21). It is a valid question, though, how conscious this character might be of this ‘kinship’. The elderly and lonesome professor in Marcell Benedek’s novel identifies himself as a Hamletian figure.

The reworkings emphasise various aspects of Hamlet’s character as he has been interpreted down the centuries. John Joughin views Hamlet as “the proto-intellectual and critic-adaptor” (2003, p. 133). Indeed, he appears as an actor (Tóth-Máthé’s short story), a poet or playwright (Juhász’s novel) or other artist (a composer in Gáspár’s play), yet also as a scholar (for example, in Sárközi’s play Hamlet has a doctorate in economics, having written a thesis on conjuncture and the dairy industry) a student (Bereményi’s *maturandus*, Halmi) or a teacher (in Benedek’s and Rákosi’s fiction).

The most privileged characters in Hungarian rewrites – apart from the eponymous protagonist – so far have been Ophelia, Horatio and Fortinbras (the latter two often together). As it has been discussed in Part Two with regard to the Pécs performance, Horatio is a character who speaks little in the play, therefore various ‘translators’, such as directors and rewriters, have taken considerable ‘liberties’ with his figure. There are two plays centralising the character of Horatio, to the extent of making him the titular character. These plays are Zsolt Pozsgai’s (born 1960) *Horatio*, premièred in 1988, and Ádám Niklai’s *Horatio*, written in 1979-1980 and published posthumously in 1990. The title of the stage version of the latter is *Alakosok (Horatio halála)* [~Histrionics (The Death of Horatio)], which shifts the focus on the players. It also emphasises that the characters play roles in a metaphoric sense, for instance, there may be a hidden allusion to Janus-facedness in the political arena. Niklai (1924-1985) was primarily a poet.

An 1891 novelette written in a fake-folk manner by the eminent humoresque writer Viktor Rákosi (1860-1929) is also narrated by the Horatio figure of the story (Béla Szentpáli). This rehabilitates the Shakespearean character. *Egy falusi Hamlet* [A village *Hamlet*] is not only a story of untangling family secrets amongst the declining nobility of the late-nineteenth century provincial Hungary; it is also a narrative about male bonding, and a celebration of same-sex friendship and camaraderie (between Szentpáli and the Hamlet figure, Miklós Turszki).

György Bolgár (born 1946) – primarily a journalist – recently published a remotivated and reoriented *Hamlet* narrative. He also prepared its adaptation for the stage. The Horatio of *Valami bűzlik (A 242-es ügynök naplója)* [Something stinks (The Diary of Agent 242)] is Fortinbras’s spy throughout the story. As Bolgár notes in an interview,

Horatiót választottam főszereplőnek, aki Shakespeare művében a rezonőr szerepét tölti be. Mindenkivel jóban van, mégsem húz senkihez, nem foglal állást, már-már színtelen alak.

[For my main character I chose Horatio, who plays the role of the *raisonneur* in Shakespeare’s work. He’s on good terms with everybody, yet he doesn’t take sides with anybody, he doesn’t take a stance, he is almost a dull figure.] (Szepesi 2004)

Antal Sobor’s (born 1933) short story “Fortinbras” (2003) seems to reiterate this stereotypical Horatio: the scholarly friend who is only there to witness and to interpret, but not to act. In this work he asks Fortinbras’s consent to return to his studies in Wittenberg. The Horatio character has more weight than usual in the 2001 Lencsés-Horváth rock opera, too. Again, there is an emphasis on male bonding. As this Horatio explains,

Vannak oly dolgok, mit asszony nem érthet [...]

Én majd ott leszek az igaz barát.

[There are things that a woman can’t understand.

I will be there as a true friend.]

János Dénes Orbán (born 1973), a young Transylvanian poet, also turned

to the figure of Horatio in his 1996 poem “E versben is, Horatio” [In This Poem, too, Horatio]. The aphoristic phrase “There are more things...” is reworked (via Arany’s translation)¹⁴⁴, without the direct apostrophe of Horatio: “Több dolgok vannak ím e versben, / mint sárga ember Ázsiába” [There are more things in this poem as you can see / than yellow people in Asia].

With regard to Fortinbras, two works by the political analyst and economist László Lengyel (born 1950) deserve mention: *Fortinbras királysága* [The Kingdom of Fortinbras] (2000) and its ‘sequel’, *Fortinbras-ügy* [The Fortinbras Case] (2002). They are satirical allegories on contemporary Hungarian politics. These book-length pamphlets use a framework provided by *Hamlet* – in terms of some character functions, aphoristic sayings –, apart from numerous other intertexts to criticise the political system, mainly the right-wing. Bolgár’s abovementioned work also gives importance to Fortinbras. Antal Sobor’s short story entitled “Fortinbras” examines Hamlet, Horatio and Fortinbras as members of the very same generation, who could have played in the same playground as young children.

There are several hermeneutic uncertainties around Ophelia (regarding her relationship with Hamlet, the cause of her madness, her controversial suicide, and so on). Thus, her character can be ‘fleshed out’ very inventively in reworkings of the play. Juhász’s novel hints at some kind of reconciliation between Ophelia and Hamlet, intending to ‘correct’ or ‘revise’ the ‘source(s)’ by portraying a Hamlet who is not so ruthless with the Ophelia character. Juhász imagines a Hamlet who offers a chance to Ophelia to go with him to England, which she turns down because of her sense of filial duty. Thus Hamlet is almost ethically acquitted in relation to Ophelia, which, of course, raises the question whether the rewrite favours Hamlet or Ophelia in this respect. It is also emphasised in this rewrite

¹⁴⁴ For translations of the aphorism see Appendix One item 13.

how upset Hamlet was after Ophelia's death.

Bereményi, Sárközi and Kiss all concentrate on the physical aspect of the character. The Ophelia figure is even raped in Bereményi's play. Halmi encourages his schoolmate, Foglyos, to 'have' the mentally slightly handicapped and, thus, very vulnerable Lia. (She dotes on Halmi, yet he is annoyed by her.) This fits in with the nihilistic picture the text paints of the post-'56 generation. Sárközi's Olga is indecisive and weak as Ophelia is viewed to be by many interpreters of Shakespeare's play. Olga's prudishness seems to be due to her family background. It is ironic how Lengyel, her father, guards her virginity and, at the same time, wants to 'sell' it or 'invest' it as a commodity. Deborah Cartmell (2000, p. 25) points out that out of the famous scenes from *Hamlet* it is the nunnery scene that is the most often reworked (including its parodies). In her understanding, though, the great soliloquy is part of the nunnery scene (otherwise this speech by Hamlet would probably have the largest number of offshoots). It is also noteworthy that most rewrites have an Ophelia figure with a name either directly derived from the Shakespearean name (Lia in Gáspár's and Juhász's work) or otherwise related to it (Lili), perhaps by having the same initial (Sárközi's Olga).

Even though Yorick is not a proper character in the play, his figure also serves as a frequent motif in Hungarian literature and in the arts. Yorick provides an intertext with connotations of transience, appearing in poetry by István Kormos (1923-1977) and Éva Finta (born 1954) and being the subject of a film by László Marcell with the same title as Kormos's poem: *Szegény Yorick* [Poor Yorick]. Other emphatic figures in rewrites include Polonius (in Ottó Orbán's poem and in Bereményi's play, where he appears as Pilisi, Halmi's teacher), and particularly the ghost, which is a dominant intertext in poetry inspired by *Hamlet*.

The above sampling is illustrative of the many ways reworkers-as-translators identify and fill hermeneutic gaps in the ‘original(s)’, in the ever-growing ‘Hamlet’ palimpsest. The following investigation of a wide range of Hungarian rewrites of *Hamlet* hopes to show that these types do not conform to any strict schema; however, these categories assist the critic when tackling such texts. When examining the rewrites, references will be made to non-Hungarian Shakespeare adaptations as well, in order to place them in the culturally and generically diverse context of Shakespeare translations in the broadest sense of the term.

Chapter One

Hamlet in Drama: Margit Gáspár's play

Turning *Hamlet* upside down

Margit Gáspár's (1905-1994) play *Hamletnek nincs igaza* [Hamlet Is Not Right], written in 1957-58 and first performed in 1962, is an example of the overt politicisation of *Hamlet* in Hungary. In this drama the Hamlet figure does not die (as in Kazinczy's version), but – together with his mother and now reconciled with his would-be stepfather – he looks forward to a better socialist future. The author – a playwright, novelist, translator, theatre manager, theatre historian and journalist – was a versatile figure in recent Hungarian cultural history, though undeservedly neglected by contemporary critics. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 (at that time viewed by the ruling power as a counterrevolution led by the enemies of communism) put an end to her career as a theatre manager. As a pro-establishment manager, with the outbreak of the revolution she was expected to resign. When the post-revolutionary regime wanted to reinstate her, she was unwilling to take on the post again. She retreated into solitude as a writer, only returning to public view with her rewriting of the *Hamlet* theme a couple of years later.

Gáspár was experienced in adaptation, partly due to her career as a theatre manager of the operetta house in Budapest (she was responsible for some major plot alterations to the pieces they performed), in addition to her own experience as a writer. In her third play, *Új Isten Thébában* [New God in Thebes] (1946), she revisited ancient Greek mythology and drama, composing a political satire

through the persiflage of the latter. Another attempt to tackle a semi-archetypal theme was in her relatively early (pre-socialist), unstaged play on Jesus's return to present-day Hungary. As the most recent artistic manager of the Budapest opera house, Miklós Szinetár argues, "Színházában az eredeti 'mű' mindig csak nyersanyag volt, mit kedvenc színészeihez formált és az aktualitáshoz" [In her theatre the original 'work' was raw material only, which she adjusted to her beloved actors and to the times] (Szinetár 1994).

Her disillusionment, her feeling of abandonment and self-justification, found form in the play *Hamletnek nincs igaza*, which recounts the shattering of the beliefs of a young and very talented piano student when he discovers that his beloved and idolised father committed suicide, having realised that he was mistaken in certain political matters. The play is set in the last few months of 1955. The action concludes on New Year's Eve, with the clock ticking to signal the ominous start of 1956. The twenty-year-old Gábor Tárnok (nicknamed Gabi), commemorating his father, composes a *Hamlet* overture for his graduation examination. He is unaware that his father, István Tárnok, came to a wrong decision as a judge when he condemned to death a number of people whom he believed to be traitors of the system, including Gábor Mike (now aged 45), his closest friend from the dawn of Hungarian communism. This subplot covertly alludes to the so-called show trials in Hungary (and other countries in the Soviet bloc) around 1950, in which people were sentenced to death or long-term imprisonment on the basis of fabricated evidence in a process intended to cleanse socialist society of its traitors. Although Tárnok had condemned these people as guilty in all honesty, in 1955 he discovered that they were, in fact, innocent. Remorse drove Tárnok to commit suicide. This fact is carefully hidden from young Gábor by his mother, Anna. She is a devoted communist who, however, is

in want of some reassurance. This reassurance is provided by the former political prisoner Gábor Mike (his death sentence having been commuted to life imprisonment), who is amnestied and freed from prison in 1955. He had been infatuated with Anna when they were young, but due to some misunderstanding their love had remained unconsummated, and she later married Tárnok. Now they rediscover their strong feelings for each other and decide to get married. Gábor is doubly shocked by his mother's 'betrayal' and the revelation of his father's mistake at the trials and his subsequent suicide. Since he treated his father as the perfect embodiment of communist ideals, he is now absolutely disillusioned and chooses to desert his country. Fleeing the country is presented here as the ultimate offence a Hungarian citizen could possibly commit at the time, and the crisis in the drama culminates with Gábor Tárnok's decision to leave. His helpers are Frici Kalotai and Balázs Sümegi Nagy, the revengeful son of an assassinated supporter of Miklós Horthy's regime (right-wing Regent of Hungary between 1920 and 1944). When they come to fetch Gábor, his mother – who only realises what is happening at this moment – refuses to let him go. Sümegi Nagy is determined to shoot Anna. Her son jumps in front of her and is shot in her stead, but only injured. Sümegi Nagy manages to escape westward, and the next day he talks there on the radio, presumably about the situation in Hungary. (This is probably in Austria, although this is not stated in the play.) Frici, on the contrary, is abandoned by Sümegi near the border, and freezes to death. Gabi is relieved from his apathy when his father's apologetic letter to Gábor Mike, written just before his suicide, is read out. In this communication István Tárnok admits that his judgement was flawed, and regrets having been misled. He appeals to Mike to look after his son. Critics found the device of the reading aloud of a letter at a particularly tense moment of the final act of the play an awkward choice in

theatrical terms. This was also the case with some of the lengthier political points which only one reviewer dared to mention, and even in his case, only parenthetically (Tamás 1962).

Aspects of intertextuality on the page and on the stage: characters, scenes and truisms

The play reminds one of *Hamlet*, especially in terms of plot and characters, but the situation is reversed here. The father is not faultless and even though he makes his mistakes conscientiously, he is not a 'suitable' idol for Gábor. At least that is what the play suggests, in addition to promoting the dethroning of idols. Furthermore, old Tárnok is not killed but he kills himself. He is responsible for misleading Gabi, who needs other – moderate, yet dedicated – communists to put him on the right track. The Claudius figure (Mike), on the other hand, turns out to be a benevolent and honest person. (Significantly, here it is the Claudius character who shares the same name as the protagonist, in contrast with *Hamlet*, where the father and son have a common name.) Mike's love for Anna-Gertrude is longstanding and deep. Their reunion is not presented as sinful despite the short interval (a few months) between Tárnok's death and their new commitment. Anna is not a lascivious woman putting her sexual proclivities ahead of her family ties, but a devoted mother who hides the truth about Tárnok senior from her son out of sympathy. She is presented as a strong and proud woman, and morally impeccable. It is she who reads out the letter her late husband wrote to Mike, because Gábor is too confused to make out the blurred lines. Lia, the character reminiscent of Ophelia, is a rather pale figure (Hámori 1962, Lőkös 1963). (The derivation from Ophelia's name is clear.) Being a law student she is a wholehearted communist (secretary of the Young Communists' Association) but

is also a caring young woman in the presence of Gábor. They are not actually a couple, and she seems more committed than Gábor, who becomes increasingly solipsistic and uncommunicative as the action wears on. Lia's relationship with Gabi is not passionate or erotic, which might be traced back to the sober communist ideal of prudish writing and theatre-making. Overt eroticism and explicit dialogue were discouraged. The underlying ideology is that this feature of the play makes it accessible to teenagers, members of KISZ (Young Communists' Association). The body language Gábor uses in his contact with Lia (an aspect of the play carefully thought through by the playwright) underlines this. He jokingly spars with Lia when she starts to sulk over their ideological differences of opinion (mainly concerning the issue of whether to invite Mike as a speaker to the Young Communists' Association or not). Later on there are occasions when he embraces her, and the ending gives a clear account of their reconciliation. Anna realises that Gábor's interest in Lia is not very intimate, and she warns him that he should not marry her just because that fits into his five-year plan of the good communist. (The employment of these terms at the same time exemplifies the dialogue's immersion in socialist rhetoric.)

There are a few characters that do not directly derive from *Hamlet*. In this respect, a parallel can be drawn between this theatrical rewrite and the 2003 production at Pécs. Introducing new characters places the Pécs performance on the borderline between translation and adaptation, and points to a specific strategy of rewriting. In Gáspár's play the late István Tárnok's secretary, Lili Kalotai, is the epitome of a woman without any morals. (According to her son, she changes her lovers as often as her underwear.) She is a time-server, always supporting the current authority. Having overtly despised Gábor Mike for a long time, she is now his ardent supporter. In the last scene, however, a more human side of her

character emerges, when she expresses her worries about her son. It seems as if Gertrude's character has been split by Gáspár into two: a woman being highly concerned with her son (Anna), and one with loose sexual morals (Lili). From another perspective, Lili can also be seen as a female 'reincarnation' of Polonius. Driven by a need for being indispensable, she is always plotting and trying to please those in power in an unscrupulous manner. She is one of the less monochrome characters in the play, though she is not a fully rounded one. One of the best scenes highlighting her slightly more composite character is when she wails over the loss of her son:

A főhadnagy, aki közölte velem, konyakkal itatott és támogatott, mert el akartam esni. (*Torz mosollyal.*) Aztán ott ültem ezzel a kis bolond kalappal a fejemen, felnéztem rá és egy pillanatig arra gondoltam, hogy milyen jó, széles a válla. És a következő percben felüvöltöttem, mert úgy járt át a tudat, mintha injekciós tűvel lövellték volna belém, hogy Frici nincs, nincs, és nem lesz soha többé!

[The chief lieutenant who broke the news for me made me drink cognac and was assisting me as I was about to fall. (*With an eerie smile.*) Then I just sat there with this silly little hat on my head, looked up at him and, for a moment, I thought what nice broad shoulders he has. And the next moment I shrieked because, as if through an injection, I suddenly realised that Frici is not alive; he isn't and he never will be again.] (p. 71)¹⁴⁵

This is one of the few points in the play when the reader or spectator may see her (or, indeed, any of the *dramatis personae*) as a flesh-and-blood character, and not only as a mouthpiece for different ideas. Lili ends up wishing Anna the loss of her child too. Her cruelty in this scene reminds one of Lady Macbeth rather than of any female figure from *Hamlet*. There is some acting potential in this character, which was exploited, according to the reviewers, by the young Nóra Tábori of Vígszínház (she later became a leading actor in Hungary). In the noteworthy production in Pécs Lili is dressed in violet gloves and a shawl, while

¹⁴⁵ All page numbers after references to the play are made to Gáspár 1963. Even though there is an English translation of the play by József Harvany (Gáspár n. d.), and this has been consulted for the thesis, the present author decided to give her own translations of the title and the quoted passages, hoping that they represent a closer reading of the 'original' and hence highlight the *Weltanschauung* of the 'original' to the English-language reader.

Anna, who is in mourning, wears plain black. In this context the colour violet signifies frivolity and sinfulness. Lili's son, Frici is a likeminded character. Being the son of an emigré, he is not a dedicated communist. It is he who finally cajoles Gábor into the defection. These two figures, who are shown as posing a threat to communism, the 'inner enemy' ('belső ellenség'), may allude to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the sense that they serve two masters for the sake of their own advantage, and they lack any sense of scruple. They may also recall the character of Biberach, a political turncoat from the major nineteenth-century Hungarian play *Bánk bán* (1814) by József Katona. (Katona's play also enjoys a marked intertextual relationship with *Hamlet*.)

Polonius, Horatio, Laertes, Fortinbras and other important figures in the 'original' are missing as directly transposed characters here, though we might identify traces of them. One may see Frici as a distorted Horatio, who, as opposed to the 'source character', does not truly understand his 'friend' and gives him wrong advice. This is, of course, debatable to some extent even in the case of the 'source character'. Regarding how adaptations treat Horatio, let it suffice to remind ourselves of Charles Marowitz's rewrite of *Hamlet*, which excised Horatio completely. The Pécs production of *Hamlet*, analysed in Part Two, also had a rather inferior Horatio in it. In Gáspár's version Frici makes friends with Gábor also because of his social status, because Gábor is close to those in power. Balázs Sümegi Nagy, whose family name is constructed to recall traditional Hungarian family names consisting of two components, can be loosely linked to the characters of either Laertes or Fortinbras, who – being foils to Hamlet in the play – both fight for the truth of their deceased father.¹⁴⁶

The play has no strong structural plot resemblance with *Hamlet*. There is

¹⁴⁶ Family names such as Sümegi Nagy sounded suspicious for communists as they had an aristocratic ring.

no one-to-one agreement between the scenes of *Hamlet* and this rewriting. However, there is a scene recalling the closet scene and another that is reminiscent of the nunnery scene (both featuring a physically violent Hamlet). The device of a letter of crucial importance also links the play to *Hamlet*, although this is a very widespread *topos*.

The play also imitates *Hamlet* in the sense that it abounds with semi-aphoristic statements. Among these there are a few cheap communist truisms, offering life recipes, vaguely in the style of some of the purple passages associated with the Bard. Some of these are commonplaces that already exist in everyday parlance. Mike says to Gábor in the final scene: “Nem nekem fontos, fiam, hogy beszélj. Magadnak fontos” [It’s not for me that it is important that you talk, son. This is important for yourself.] (p. 80). Anna also uses a plain phrase in the same scene, saying: “Nem te vagy kicsi. Az idők nagyok!” [It is not you who is small. The times are great!] (p. 81). Some of the platitudes are made up. The following seems to adopt the structure of a New Testament parable:

A nagyon elfoglalt embernek mindig két élettársa van: a felesége és a titkára. Az élete nagyobbik felét a másodikkal éli. A titkár az összekötő kapocs közte és a világ között. Egy kicsit a szemüvege, rajta keresztül látja az embereket.

[Very busy people have two life companions: their wives and their secretaries. They spend the majority of their life with the latter. The secretary is the link between them and the world. To some extent the secretary is the glasses through which they see people.] (pp. 13-14)

The following less powerful simile is imbued with socialist ideology. “Az ember nem változtathatja olyan sűrűn az aktatáskáját, mint a meggyőződését” [One cannot change his/her briefcase as often as his/her convictions] (p. 16).

There are, nevertheless, obvious allusions to *Hamlet* – mainly through Arany’s ‘golden’ translation. The following passage concerns Gabi during the process of working on his *Hamlet* overture. It suggests that *Hamlet* is food and abode (or, in a more domesticating translation: meat and drink) for the budding

composer:

Mit tudom én, másoknak tetszeni fog-e? A mondanivalómnak megfelelő alaphang az, amit végre megtaláltam. (*Felkapja az asztalról a Hamlet-kötetet és magához öleli.*) Nem hiába élek hetek óta ebben a rémséges remekműben, hogy szinte már egy hús vagyok vele. (*Nevetve.*) Mint a kukac a gyümölcssel: étellem is, házam is...

[How would I know if others will like it or not? Now I have found the right tone for my message. (He picks up the *Hamlet* volume from the table and holds it close to himself.) No wonder I've been living for weeks in this terrific work of art; now I'm almost one flesh with it.¹⁴⁷ (Laughing.) Like the fruit for the worm: it's both my food and abode.] (p. 37)

The passage overtly plays upon the image of the nutshell from Act II Scene 2: "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space – were it not that I have bad dreams."¹⁴⁸ It also alludes to Hamlet's description of the "convocation of politic worms" eating Polonius's body (IV/3). Cheese-worms are mentioned by Frici in the play, alluding to his father being a cheese factory owner (p. 19). This usage plays down the loftiness or pathos associated with Shakespearean language; it trivialises Shakespeare's wordplay. However, since it is not an overt reference, it also poses the question how far one should be going in identifying Shakespearean or semi-Shakespearean references. Another Shakespearean (albeit more distant) ramification of this metaphorical passage is Hamlet's quip to Claudius before leaving for England: "Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh; so my mother" (Act II Scene 4). This theologically based reasoning is changed into the identification or symbiosis of book and person in Gáspár's play.

After Gabi's above quip Anna reposts in haste that *Hamlet* is terrific food and terrific abode (p. 37), implying that he should not delve into it to an unhealthy extent. (The play even appears in his dreams.) This discussion is succeeded by Lia's account of her Hamletian dream in which the Ghost misled Hamlet. Despite

¹⁴⁷ In a more domesticating translation: 'I've been living this terrific work of art ...'.

¹⁴⁸ For translations of this quotation see Appendix One item 11.

the warning of his friends, Hamlet followed the Ghost and fell over the edge of the battlement. Here Lia quotes Arany's version for "what if it tempt you toward the flood [, my Lord], / Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff" (I/4; 69-70). Arany's version is more compact: "Hátha folyamba csal, vagy borzadályos sziklacsúcsra..." [What if it tempts you into a river or to a dreadful cliff]. Arany's translation of "The time is out of joint" is also read out by Frici as he lifts the book from the desk. This is also a *mise-en-abyme* in the play, since it problematises a chief issue of the text, namely coming to terms with a puzzling historical moment.

Let us now have a look at how intertextuality with *Hamlet* worked in various stagings of Gáspár's play. Lajos Máté, the director of the performance at Békéscsaba, draws attention to the images recalling *Hamlet* in their way of staging the play (Máté 1962). They were trying to mediate between classic and modern by turning to very familiar tricks in staging *Hamlet* and adding some indicators of the modern environment to it. This was realised especially in the setting, since the villa in Zugliget was furnished in a classical style, and the actor playing Gábor was instructed to adopt Hamletian poses in certain scenes. The reviewer Ágnes Takács (1962) also emphasises that the Vígszínház production was strongly reminiscent of *Hamlet*, both verbally and in terms of body movement. Such a reading may be confirmed by recent research done on the issue of citation within the theatre, namely by W. B. Worthen. In his contribution to *Shakespeare and Modern Theatre*, Worthen – taking the recent cultural event of the opening of the Globe on the Bankside as a starting point – convincingly argues that the theatre has its own tradition of behavioural conventions, hence, historicity has its own workings in the context of the theatre: "Acting [...] is perhaps the epitome of citational behaviour" (2001, p. 129). Worthen's research elucidates

that coming to terms with the past is not a privilege of literary practice and literary studies. Stage performance does indeed have the potential to be just as intertextual as a literary reading is (even though he does not use this term), yet in a different way: through “citational behaviours” particularly pertinent to the theatre. If a production of Margit Gáspár’s *Hamletnak nincs igaza* – even if unwittingly – uses gestures, movements typical of *Hamlet* performances, this means there is a struggle going on with tradition, with the power and authority of classics. This phenomenon is akin to how Ádám Nádasdy’s translation (1999), and his accompanying rhetoric in metatexts, poses a challenge to Arany’s translation and its sacred status. Whether one changes the already existing material or reinforces values of the ‘source’ or ‘original’, the encounter with tradition is unavoidable.

Holding up a mirror

The play unwittingly talks about different aspects of the time and place when and where it was written. The examination of a few minor details from the play will shed light on this aspect. A small instance emphasises the imbalance in the dynamics of housework in terms of gender. Lia employs a white lie when Anna leaves her in the house to chaperone the allegedly suicidal Gábor after he has been shot. She says to Gábor she is only staying there in order to heat up his dinner for him in case he is hungry. The implication that a young man is not accustomed to heating his meal allows the reader to conclude that there is a traditional distribution of household chores in the society the play is set in.

The briefcase Lili had been given by old Tárnok as a souvenir from Prague recalls the special status of superiority and exoticism attributed to miscellaneous articles from abroad – even if from the Soviet bloc – merely because they were

items of foreign origin. Although the briefcase from fellow-socialist Prague could offer blissful pleasure without any remorse, Frici describes how they used to tread on the clothes they received from his emigrated father because they wanted them to look old and shabby. People and objects from beyond the Soviet bloc were morally dubious. The only authorised travel in the course of the action is to Moscow, where Mike goes, and in the final scene expresses his intention to go again in February 1956, for the sake of the new congress.

Through Gábor's mention of Jenő Rejtő's adventure novel *Piszkos Fred, a kapitány* [Loathsome Fred, the Captain] one can also have an incomplete insight into the popular literature read at the time. The play thus translates its time of writing into the textual fabric labelled 'Hamlet'.

The characters and the plot are entirely fictitious; however, *Hamletnak nincs igaza* can also be seen as a play into which Margit Gáspár translated her emotional and intellectual turmoil, which she could not probably have done in a political treatise or in a diary or autobiography meant for publication. The play also offers a case study of translating the personal into the political. There might be an autobiographical element in young Gábor's profession, since Margit Gáspár herself was practising to be a concert pianist, which she gave up, because she was too shy to perform in public (Békési and Nagy 1989). (This ambition was mainly fuelled by her mother.) However, this is not necessarily a play 'à clef' (play with a key) in biographical terms. Gáspár may be perceived behind a few of the characters rather than behind a single one: the originally hopeful, then disillusioned Gábor Tárnok, who finally regains his strength and prospects; István Tárnok, who served the dogmatic and ideologically corrupt system but only realised that he was wrong when it was too late; Gábor Mike, who faced unjust insults, yet remained strong in his commitment; the drifting and sexually

promiscuous Lili (Gáspár had many superficial affairs herself when she was trying to break away from her great flame, Marinetti). The villa in Zugliget may also recall a painful memory of Gáspár's life. She was hiding her Jewish mother from the fascists in their Zugliget villa in the final stages of WW2. Being questioned by officers at a random check she turned to her experience in the theatre, acting as if she were a servant in her own home, accompanied by her elderly and dotty mother. Moreover, if one reads the play parallel with her autobiography, one realises that certain minute details from Gáspár's life found their way into the play in a recognisable manner. When Frici derisively greets Lia wishing her strength, health and later on many boys (literally: male children), this potentially recalls Gáspár's painful memory of being greeted by "Salute e figli maschi" [Health and male children!] by the Venetian Catholic priest who paid visits to the Boni family while she was married to the jeweller Mario Boni (Gáspár 1985, p. 183). When Frici sordidly invites both Lia and Gábor to have sex with him at the same time, one may remember Gáspár's upset at the rumours that circulated about her involvement in liaisons with theatre managers and their wives in her younger days (Gáspár 1985, p. 321).

Reception in and outside Hungary

Gábor's decision to protect his mother was seen as a symbolic reference in favouring his homeland. A reviewer of the Szolnok performance, Tibor Hernádi, explicitly claims that the mother figure stood for the socialist country, which was thus rescued by the young hero (1964). The very last sentence of the play, uttered by Mike, might suggest this reading, although it does not openly identify the mother figure with the country: "Bárhogy is meghasonlottál édesanyáddal, mikor

fegyvert fogtak rá, elébe vetetted magad” [No matter how much you have lost faith with your mother, when a gun was pointed at her, you threw yourself in front of her] (p. 82). An untitled and unauthored typescript about the play, held at the Hungarian Theatre Institute, reiterates this message, adding the element of personal trial: “ha megpróbáltatások lesznek, tégy úgy, mint amikor anyádra lőttek: testeddel is véd meg” [When tribulations are approaching do what you did when your mother was shot at: defend her even if with your body]. It is not the Hungarian state but the socialist community that is stressed, in the vein of a peculiar socialist patriotism. Kádár, during whose regime this play was written and performed, was a pioneer in propagating socialist patriotism amongst the leaders of the Warsaw pact member states (cf. Hoensch 1988, p. 235). There is a long tradition in the Hungarian language of associating the concepts of mother, language and country. Expressions such as *anyanyelv* (mother tongue), *szülőföld* (birthgiving soil) or *anyaföld* (mother soil) exemplify this way of thinking. This is not a uniquely Hungarian phenomenon. It is present, for instance, in some Shakespearean histories, such as *Richard II* (cf. Fitzpatrick 2003). The following insight of Benedict Anderson helps to place this in the wider theoretical context of the discourse of nationalism:

Something of the nature of [...] political love can be deciphered from the ways in which languages describe its object: either in the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, *Vaterland*, *patria*) or that of home (*heimat* or *tanah air*) [earth and water, the phrase for the Indonesians’ native archipelago]. Both idioms denote something to which one is naturally tied. (1991, p. 143)

This play comprises an example of the politicisation of the *Hamlet* theme as the mother figure and the (mother) country are closely associated.

As in *Hamlet*, there is a major conflict within Gábor-Hamlet’s mind at the heart of the play. This concerns whether there is any sense in communism after what has been revealed to him. The question here is ‘to stay or not to stay’ instead

of the more metaphysical “To be or not to be”. Nevertheless, leaving one’s country in a literal sense and expatriating into death in a metaphorical sense are associated in the play when Mike points out to Gábor that old Tárnok emigrated into death. This unveils another intertext with *Hamlet*: the motif of death as an undiscovered country from which no traveller returns (cf. III/1; 79-80). Mike asserts that Gabi’s attempt to leave the country (which he calls a suicidal act) and his father’s suicide are both due to their escapism rather than facing up to the situation. It is clear from old Tárnok’s letter that he did not excuse himself. The main conflict is thus political. The author considered the play a psychological drama rather than a political drama (as she expressed in the programme of the production in Békéscsaba), but even the contemporaneous reception accentuated the dominance of the political element. She was even criticised for not providing very flesh-and-blood figures (cf. Monostori 1962). Gábor-Hamlet came across to some performance reviewers as a vehicle for ideas rather than as a human being (F. A. 1962). Sümegi Nagy’s character was also found to be no more than an extremist mouthpiece of the ‘irredent’ ideology (Hámori 1962). Although Gáspár declared that she remained alert to not writing a single sentence which would sound like a political argument, she did not actually achieve this. The music Gábor composes on *Hamlet* is also of symbolic importance. He might see his father as a personage as grand as Hamlet, and he tears the sheet of the work in progress into pieces out of disillusionment.

The play was mainly seen as a text depicting the communist ‘saving’ of Gábor Tárnok with the aid of motherly love, the caring affection of Lia and Mike’s wisdom. However, one theatre critic finds the absent father figure to be the main character of the play, due to his constant haunting of the characters, especially his son (Monostori 1962). Gáspár also emphasises in the Békéscsaba

programme that Tárnok senior is the eighth character (though this character is not to appear on the scene). His picture is on the living room wall of the distinguished villa in Zugliget (an elegant district of the capital), always reminding the dwellers of his life and principles. This stresses the parallel with the ghost from *Hamlet*, especially due to the disposal of his portrait in the closet scene. This could also allude to the motif of the portrait of the authoritarian and patriarchal father, Kazimir Baradlay in the 1869 novel *A kőszívű ember fiai* [The Sons of the Stone-hearted Man] by Mór Jókai.¹⁴⁹ The resolute widow of this novel (centred also on a revolution, that of 1848-49) swears in front of the portrait to act in all matters regarding their three sons in opposition to her late pro-Austrian husband's will, and intends to convince them to serve their mother country. A point of dramatic culmination in the play is when we see the empty space of the picture removed by Gábor. This takes place at the same time as the sheet music is torn into pieces. This symbolic act of iconoclasm sheds light on Gábor's inner turmoil. In his letter to Mike, Tárnok asks him not to demolish his son's memory of him, if possible. However, he also insists that if there is a necessity for the truth being uncovered, his son should be informed about his deeply regretted past (p. 80).

Some performance reviews emphasise Mike's role as one of the most important (for example in *Dunántúli Napló* 1962). He is the true socialist hero, who retains his dedication and hope against all odds. His moderate, humane attitude to communism is juxtaposed to the late Tárnok's narrow-minded dogmatism. Mike is the character who most ostensibly gives utterance to the teaching that communism can renew itself, provided mistakes can be admitted and surmounted. He rejects thinking in black and white terms. As he explains it to Gábor in the finale, old Tárnok was both guilty and honest. 'Nézz szembe végre

¹⁴⁹ The novel was published in English under the title *The Baron's Sons: A Romance of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848* (1900, translated by P. F. Bicknell).

ezzel a kettősséggel” [Face this duality at last], he urges Gábor (p. 81). The fact that Mike and Tárnok junior share the same forename also accentuates via a very simple dramatic trick that there is continuity between these two characters: the torch is handed on by one Gábor to another. The first name Gábor had indeed been chosen by Tárnok junior’s parents because it was the name of his father’s then best friend.

To look at stage history more specifically, the play was first performed in Budapest (on the stage of the experimental Ódry Színpad related to the Vígszínház, then in the Vígszínház proper), which was followed by productions in most major Hungarian provincial theatres (for instance, Békéscsaba, Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged and Szolnok). These performances occupied a very short time span, between 1962 and 1964, with most productions dating from 1962 (cf. Appendix Five). (Small wonder that the drama has never been revived since.) The play toured all around the country, including large villages with cultural institutions (művelődési ház) set up under the communist regime. After several performances the cast stayed on for a question and answer session with the audience in order to exchange ideas about the ‘optimistic’ and ‘enlightening’ nature of the performance. Actors’ ‘testimonies’ are included in the Békéscsaba programme. These are concerned with how the individual actors interpreted the roles they acted, and how they approached the characters. Photographs of the individual actors are attached to these ‘testimonies’ in order to make them even more influential. Ilona Szendrey’s text is entitled “Találkozásom Annával 1962-ben” [My encounter with Anna in 1962], while Sándor Szoboszlai’s account poses the question “Mire tanít Mike Gábor?” [What does Gábor Mike teach us?]. The word *testimony* – a term from religious language – aptly, if metaphorically, describes these texts. The term is originally associated with martyrs, who openly

vouchsafed their beliefs. We could have employed the term *paratext*, after Genette, which would be theoretically more suitable; yet, the semi-religious one is chosen in order to demonstrate how much the cultic Shakespearean paradigm continues even in a very secular period such as 1960s' Hungary. These actors in 1962, however, were most probably talked into writing or merely adding their names to these testimonies, which were obviously devised to underline the ideology with which the play is impregnated. The Budapest performance was recorded by the radio and had already been transmitted in 1962. Hungarian Radio repeated it again in 2000, for the twentieth anniversary of the death of the actress Elma Bulla (who played Anna).

Hamletnek nincs igaza ran altogether for approximately four hundred nights, which is not a large number if one considers the amount of its *premières* nationwide. The numbers suggest that, at least outside Budapest, attendance was almost exclusively 'compulsory'. A considerable number of people must have gone to see it only because they were supposed to. The following 'call for attendance' filed in the Hungarian Theatre Institute seems to support this. A copy of this must have been sent out by one of the Propaganda Departments (AgitProp) of MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) to different places of work. The 'invitation' reads as follows:

Kedves Titkár Elvtárs!

A Vígszínházban 1962. november hó 7-én színre kerül Gáspár Margit: *Hamletnek nincs igaza* c. nagysikerű színműve. A darab megtekintése segítséget ad a VIII-ik Pártkongresszus téziseivel kapcsolatos felvilágosító munkájukban. Javasoljuk, hogy a vállalat dolgozói kollektíven tekintsék meg az előadást. [...]

[Dear Comrade Secretary,

Margit Gáspár's successful drama *Hamlet Is not Right* is going to be staged at Vígszínház on 7 November 1962. Watching the play will help you in your enlightening work to do with the main theorems of the 8th Congress of the Party. We suggest that the employees of your firm view the performance together.]

It is important to add that the word *employee* in the translation does not fully

convey the ideological power of the Hungarian word *dolgozó* (worker), used for every member of the Hungarian socialist society in employment, together with a political tone of building this society. It is also telling that the invitation is for 7 November, which was at the time a public holiday, commemorating the ‘liberation’ of Hungary by the Soviets at the end of WW2. This performance served as a means of celebrating on a ‘community’ level a day that allegedly replaces religious holidays in importance and ritualistic character. The 8th congress mentioned in the letter took place between 20-24 November 1962, announcing a phase of “complete Socialist construction” (Hoensch 1988, p. 231). This was an important event during János Kádár’s regime, which was a soft-boiled socialism after Rákosi era, which was the Hungarian version of Stalinism: “Kádár’s personal experiences of the worst forms of Stalinism did [...] rule out a return to the earlier ‘dogmatism’ of Rákosi’s personal dictatorship” (Hoensch 1988, p. 221).

The press cuttings also support the assumption that attendance was warmly recommended. A fiery, though unsigned, newspaper article appearing in the provincial daily *Szolnok Megyei Néplap* [Szolnok County Mail] in 1964 complains about the low attendance. Television (a sports programme and a cheap detective film were on that night) and a local basketball match were all blamed for the absence of the younger generation. Teachers were also criticised by the reviewer for not turning up in large numbers and not encouraging their students to do so, either. Nevertheless, in the provincial town of Kunszentmárton a member of the local state farm is congratulated on being a regular visitor of guest performances. The education journal *Köznevelés* [Public Education] considered it to be the best Hungarian drama of the season, with the suggestion that it is beneficial for young people to watch it (Fényi 1962).

The play's foreign itinerary is also worth pursuing. It was mounted in different countries of the Soviet bloc, such as Czechoslovakia (in twenty theatres!), Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union (Tallinn and rehearsals at least are recorded for Moscow, too). Some of these performances were in Hungarian, for instance in Transylvania (1972), where there is a sizeable Hungarian population, and in the former Yugoslavia (1971), for the same reason. There were negotiations with Belgium about a televisual adaptation to be shown on an Antwerp channel.¹⁵⁰ Apart from an English translation of the playtext, the Hungarian Theatre Institute has plot summaries in English, German and French. According to reports in Hungarian newspapers of the day, the play was very successful abroad. (It might have been a 'must' for some of these audiences as well – part of the cultural exchange within the Soviet bloc.) It is only the brief summary in Hungarian of Milan Polák's review of the *première* in Bratislava (1962) that adopts anything resembling a critical tone. He reports that the director and the dramaturg in Bratislava needed to cleanse the text of lofty declamations and cheap tendentiousness in order to make the characters more life-like. Polák even says that quotations from *Hamlet* sound less artificial here, which may be surprising because the Hungarian 'original' is not very abundant with citations from *Hamlet*. On the other hand, he notes that Haspra, the director, made the play more mystical than it was supposed to be. His criticism is unexpectedly sharp considering that it comes from a neighbouring communist country.¹⁵¹

A slightly surprising trace of Gáspár's reception outside Hungary is an article that appeared in an Egyptian periodical entitled *Al Gumhouria*, which

¹⁵⁰ The Hungarian Theatre Institute has a note on this, dating from 31 March 1964.

¹⁵¹ In the Hungarian accounts of the Bratislava performance it is striking that the city's name is not rendered in Hungarian (Pozsony) but the Slovak form is retained. The reason must lie with a conscious political veiling of the fact that Bratislava-Pozsony used to belong to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and had an ethnic minority Hungarian population.

focuses on literature and the arts. The Hungarian Theatre Institute stores a photocopy of the article from 14 May 1967, alongside a poor-quality English translation. Apart from the text being ungrammatical at a number of points (and certainly was not prepared by a native speaker of English), there are telling gaps in the plot summary of Gáspár's play. Gabi's attempt to defect is not even mentioned, and it is rather unclear whether old Tárnok was aware of the fabricated evidence used in the trials. The official translation leaves the subject somewhat blurred: "[...] yet after the judge passed that sentence, and after it was proved that this judge kept all the time depending in his sentences on false evidences [sic!], then he was subject to a nervous break down, and he commits suicide" (p. 2). The counter-translation, requested by the present writer confirms that the involvement of old Tárnok in the conviction of innocent people was not very clear. This could be due either to an unsatisfactory comprehension of the Arabic text, or the author's less than impeccable English. If the article was translated in Hungary, it might have been the case of using two separate translators: one for translating the text from Arabic into Hungarian, and one for translating it from Hungarian into English for potential official visitors. The Egyptian journalist, being curious about literary life in post-1956 Hungary, interviewed two authors of the time, Miklós Vidor, a poet, and Margit Gáspár.¹⁵² The journalist was interested whether the Hungarian reading public was familiar with Western literary trends of the day. Why did an Egyptian literary periodical have an interest in the art and artistic policy of an East-Central European socialist country in 1967? The Egyptian president of the time was Gamal Abdul Nasser (1952-1982), a revolutionary who greatly contributed to Egypt's independence from the UK. Having established a

¹⁵² The journalist's name was transcribed as Abd El Monem Selim by the anonymous translator of the article stored in the Hungarian Theatre Institute and as Abdul Munim Saleem by the translator who double-checked the translation at the present author's request.

form of Arab socialism, he had befriended several socialist leaders of the Soviet bloc, being interested in how socialism worked there. (He found the practice of censorship useful, for instance.) Importantly, it appears that the interviewer is not primarily interested in Hungarian art and culture of the day but in how much Hungary was open to novelties of Western literature. The two interviewees reject Duras (Margaret Dora in the translation), Robbe-Grillet (Allan Rop Garpieh), Sarraute (Natali Saroth), and Gregory Corso (George Korso), despite claiming not to have read any of them. They see these works as “false literature” “far away from our problems”, and pessimistic (while communism allegedly supports optimism). According to Gáspár, the modern French novel, for instance, lacks truth (a principal requirement of prescriptive Marxist literary criticism of the time, which had a commitment to realism).¹⁵³ It is apparent from this that these authors were hardly known in Hungary at that time, apart from isolated translations and reviews, and Gáspár’s opinion may have been based on little actual experience. (Moreover, as she stresses in her autobiography, she herself did not care very much for avant-garde or experimental writing.) When asked specifically about theatre issues, Ms Gáspár offered an English translation of *Hamletnak nincs igaza* for the journalist to read instead of providing an answer. The journalist, on the strength of this, summarised the plot and noted the play’s socialist ideology, concluding that he had, in fact, learnt something about Hungarian history this way. He emphasises that the play was translated into English in Hungary (and not

¹⁵³ The cause of the erratic spelling of the above names can only be guessed. It might be the case that Hungarian translators at this time were so protected from contemporary Western literature that they were not sure how to transcribe the names from Arabic, being unfamiliar with the names themselves. If we examine when the translation of these authors and their canonisation by academic or semi-academic articles started in Hungary, it might provide us with some evidence about this. According to the Hungarian encyclopaedia of world literature, Duras has been published in Hungarian translation since 1960 (the first translator was Albert Gyergyai), Corso since 1964, Robbe-Grillet since 1962 (the first translator was Lázár Bajomi), and Sarraute since 1963 (the first translator was Márta Farkas), although a review of her work had appeared as early as in 1959 in *Nagyvilág*.

in any English-speaking countries). State subsidy of the translation of Hungarian works into Western languages is still a prevailing practice, yet the latent assumption that British publishing houses would not have selected it for publication is also revelatory about the questionable artistic merit of the play.

Authority and authorship: Gáspár, the Shakespearean author

Since the play was seen and advertised as a creative and topical rewriting of the *Hamlet* theme, the author and some of the performance reviewers found it important to justify the act of reworking a sacred classic. Another related phenomenon is Margit Gáspár's own status as a 'Shakespearean' author. This is a similar cultural phenomenon to translators inscribing their names "alongside or over the name of Shakespeare" (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 6). Translating Shakespeare enhances the translators' reputation and may strengthen their canonical status, and retranslators or rewriters often feel bound to justify their work. In Fischlin and Fortier's understanding, "adapters of Shakespeare undertake a number of responses to Shakespeare's canonical status: some seek to supplant or overthrow; others borrow from Shakespeare's status to give resonance to their own efforts" (2000, p. 6). Associating Gáspár with Shakespeare in her devotion to literature and in other engagements is apparent in a note published in *Pesti Műsor* [What's on in Budapest] in celebration of Gáspár's 89th birthday:

Egész életműve, s ami sokkal több, egész élete arról szól, hogy Hamletnek igaza van. [...] Gáspár Margit mást se tett, mint védte Hamlet igazát. A kardnál sokkal erőtlenebb fegyverrel, tollal. Írt. Teljesen értelmetlen és felesleges vállalkozás, de gyönyörű. A jutalma pedig a legtöbb. Az ember boldog lehet.

[Her whole *oeuvre*, and what's much more, her whole life is about Hamlet being right. [...] Margit Gáspár has done nothing else but defend Hamlet's justice. With a pen – a weapon much less powerful than a sword. Writing. This is a completely senseless and superfluous venture, yet beautiful. Its reward cannot be more abundant: one can be happy.] (Anon. 1994a)

The above passage plays upon the stereotype of the Shakespearean (and here also Gáspárean) importance of a life spent writing, and thus, maintaining and guaranteeing Hamlet's truth. As Fischlin and Fortier contend in *Adaptations of Shakespeare*, rewriting is a "key location for the exploration of culture and its transmission" (2000, p. 1). This is expressed here by means of a typical trick in classical rhetoric – punning on (the title of) a work by her, namely the play under review here. Moreover, the note has the following jocular conclusion:

Most jött egy távirat: „Ismeretlenül is mély hódolattal köszöntöm Önt, kedves Gáspár Margit, születése napján: William Shakespeare”.

[A recently arrived telegram says: “Without having met you personally I greet you with profound homage, dear Margit Gáspár, on your birthday. (Signature:) William Shakespeare.”] (Anon. 1994a)

Margit Gáspár herself also compares her situation to that of Shakespeare when she talks about the end of literature in a brief interview. She claims that history has annihilated literature. Gáspár finds it hopeless to write either novels or plays because watching television offers more engaging historical experience:

Persze, az sem volt egy nagyon békés korszak, amikor egy bizonyos Shakespeare Vilmos úr igen izgalmas ügyeket tudott írni, annak ellenére, hogy azok, vagy hasonlóak, meg is történtek.

[Of course, it was not a very peaceful period either when a certain Mr Vilmos Shakespeare was writing on very exciting matters, despite the fact that those or similar ones did actually happen.] (Anon. 1990)

It is noteworthy that she mentions Shakespeare by the Magyarised, eighteenth-century form of his name: Vilmos is Hungarian for William. This also places an emphasis on the pathos and nostalgia attached to speaking in such a (politically) Shakespearean paradigm. These instances are even more telling in the context of Dezső Mészöly's imaginary dialogue with Arany, Hungary's 'almost the same but not quite' Shakespeare (in his apologetic essay discussed in Part One Chapter Two).¹⁵⁴ In Mészöly's case the ghostly appearance was urged to justify translation

¹⁵⁴ The phrase *almost the same but not quite* is appropriated from postcolonial theory here (cf. Bhabha 1999, p. 478).

strategies, while in the case of *Színházi Élet* it is used with a canonising purpose: to solidify the importance of the author under review. As shown above, one justification for what might otherwise seem to be bardicide, appears to be the claim that Shakespeare himself would appreciate this work had he miraculously had a chance to see it:

Ha Shakespeare – valamilyen csoda folytán – láthatná ezt az újfajta *Hamletet*, valószínűleg nem haragudna ötlete és hőse felhasználásáért. Maga is csaknem minden témáját előző szerzők műveiből vette át. Talán még örülne is, hogy akadt valaki, aki a Hamletek történetét ilyen időszerűen folytatta tovább.

[If Shakespeare – due to some miracle – had a chance to see this new kind of *Hamlet*, he would probably not be angry at the use of his idea and his hero. He himself also borrowed most of his subject matter from the work of earlier authors. He might even be happy if there was someone who continued the story of the Hamlets in such a topical way.] (Kemény 1962)

Not all critics are so benevolent towards adaptation. As the author of *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots*, Ruby Cohn, claims, “Shakespeare offshoots are not Shakespeare. Or, a little less tersely, no modern Shakespeare offshoot has improved upon the original” (1976, p. VII). A Shakespeare rewrite has a (partly) different intertextual network than that of its ‘original(s)’. However, it may inform future readings of the respective Shakespeare play rather than improving his work in the strict sense.

The time shift from Shakespeare’s time to Gáspár’s day also challenges a few reviewers. An important aspect is to emphasise that Gáspár – in the spirit of the attitude of discipleship – did not intend to question anything about Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, she is only interrogating the ideological blindness of one particularly contemporary Hamlet figure (her own). As she contends in the programme of the Békéscsaba performance, the title does not at all mean that she wants to debate the mentality of Shakespeare’s hero. The reason her Hamlet character is not right is because his father, the idol, was already wrong.

The element of ‘time travel’ in connection with Shakespeare is not unique

to the discourse about Gáspár's play. It is quite common in Shakespop literature, especially in the sci-fi genre (cf. Lanier 2002, p. 128). Such texts fall into two categories: in some of them Shakespeare pays an anachronistic visit to the time of the narrative (for example, in Isaac Asimov's *The Immortal Bard* from 1954); in others, a modern-day figure zooms back to Shakespeare's day to meet him and/or his contemporaries (for instance, in a Superman story from 1947, entitled *Shakespeare's Ghost Writer*).¹⁵⁵

As Douglas Lanier claims, "one of Shakespeare's attractions for popular culture is that he represents a potential, never realized for long, for bridging the cultural divide" (2002, p. 56). Some reviewers also find it important to stress that Gáspár's "Hamlet in a pullover" (as the author nicknamed it) does not feed on Shakespeare's classic in a parasitic way: "A Shakespeare teremtette helsingőri dán királyfi kései megidézése sem holmi szándékolt, ötleteskedő, a drámairodalom óriásán elősködni akaró anakronizmus." [Invoking Elsinore's Danish prince invented by Shakespeare is not some would-be smart anachronism, which wishes to feed on the giant of dramatic literature] (Mészöly 1962). This critic's justification might fall victim to Dwight Macdonald's concept of mass culture feeding on high culture without giving anything in return (cf. Storey 1997, p. 37). In his essay entitled "A Theory of Mass Culture" Macdonald asserts, "[...] Mass Culture began as, and to some extent still is, a parasitic, a cancerous growth on High Culture" (1994, p. 30). Having identified *kitsch* as the German term for mass culture, he continues, "*Kitsch* 'mines' High Culture the way improvident frontiersmen mine the soil, extracting its riches and putting nothing back" (1994, p. 30). This is the accusation against which certain critics wish to defend Gáspár's

¹⁵⁵ Patsy Stoneman talks of a similar example of rewriting the Brontës, namely Lin Haire-Sargeant's novel *Heathcliff* (1992), which not only takes the liberty of mingling characters from *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* but also has Charlotte Brontë meet Mr Lockwood on a train (cf. 1995, p. 86).

work. As Gáspár herself also stresses in the aforementioned programme, “Minden korban az írói fantázia szokott játéka volt klasszikus remekművek bizonyos vonásainak újrafeldolgozása, variálása” [In all ages it has been an accepted game of the creative imagination to rework and vary certain aspects of classic masterpieces]. Nevertheless, it has to be emphasised that the play does not unquestionably belong to the category of popular culture, it rather ranks among middlebrow artefacts, as will be discussed at a later point.¹⁵⁶

Rather than spoiling, abusing or criticising Shakespeare, the play appropriates Shakespeare for socialist ideology: it ‘re-baptises’ Shakespeare’ as a socialist. Alexander Shurbanov and Boika Sokolova amply describe this phenomenon of “painting Shakespeare red” in Bulgaria and, to a lesser extent, the Soviet context. Hungary provided no exception to this rule, either, although Hungary’s religious patterns were not adopted for the socialist Shakespeare cult as they were in primarily Orthodox Bulgaria (cf. Shurbanov and Sokolova 2001, pp. 20-21). From another perspective, the continuity of the Hungarian custodianship of the Bard is provided by Gáspár’s play. The already vibrant Shakespeare reception and cult entered a supposedly enlightened and mature communist phase. (Marxist ideology views the course of history as a process from bad towards optimal social structure, the latter being represented by communism.) Shakespeare, having witnessed a number of previous phases, had to be incorporated into the newest and allegedly final one. Gáspár’s play aptly illustrates John Joughin’s understanding of adaptation insofar as “to adapt is also to *ad-just* – to move *towards* justice or rather to open up what Derrida might term the indeterminate future-to-come of justice itself” (2003, p. 145). Or, as Christy

¹⁵⁶ Macdonald’s culture-specific view (he elaborates on US and Soviet popular culture) is only relevant here because Hungary itself has had a strongly aestheticising attitude which still prevails to this day.

Desmet puts it in broader terms, “Shakespeare must always already be co-opted by the dominant culture and caution against the easy assumption that Shakespeare can set us free” (Desmet 1999, p. 3).

It is not accidental that the secondary material one may rely on when writing on Gáspár is performance reviews, interviews, transcripts of radio programmes, and so on. Since her work is not prized by academia, it is only logical that her ‘canonisation’ takes place on a different terrain – somewhere between high and low culture ‘proper’. Indeed, it appears to be in the realm of what Macdonald discards as “a tepid, flaccid Middlebrow Culture” – namely, a homogenising entertainment between low and high culture (1994, p. 34). As the American essayist sharply contends, “There is nothing more vulgar than sophisticated *kitsch*” (Macdonald 1994, p. 34).

Strictly speaking, the play has no artistic merits. It is a so-called schematic play, almost a production line item, very much in support of an ideology. The dialogue is imbued with the message that the dogmatic, idolatric period of communism is over, and iconoclasm and reconciliation are indispensable in the period of ‘thaw’ and consolidation (which indeed took place in Hungary under János Kádár).¹⁵⁷ Stoneman expects sequels to be well written in terms of style, as well as to pose ideological challenges to their originals. As she remarks about Emma Tennant’s *Pemberley*, a sequel to Austen’s *Emma*, “it fails to ‘right’ the text by failing to ‘wright’ the text” (1995, p. 86). “Failures of craft” (Stoneman 1995, p. 86) can be noticed in Gáspár’s play, too, as it is far too deeply immersed in the political ideology the author believed in. Even though this instance of appropriation is not “ungrounded” enough (Joughin 2003, p. 144) – either from

¹⁵⁷ Another ‘schematic’ play from the time that deals with the falsity of idolisation is András Berkesi’s 1963 *A kör bezárul* [The Circle Closes] (cf. <http://mek.oszk.hu/02200/02228/html/06/550.html>).

Hamlet or from its own formative ideology –, nor can it pride itself on much of an “originary governance”, which Joughin (2003, p. 144) finds essential for an adaptation to turn into an exemplary, rule-making work. However, the play under review still testifies to the palimpsest status of ‘Hamlet’ in Hungarian culture. More generally speaking, it also indicates that there is a “constant process of origination” (Joughin 2003, p. 131) around *Hamlet*.

The mummification of an author’s name in cultural memory happens on non-academic grounds too, even though it employs different means and occurs in different forums. Margit Gáspár’s *oeuvre*, and its ‘reception’, has had as its site a wide range of periodicals from daily newspapers and listing programmes via radio talk shows to the leading theatre journal of the country and the most prominent women’s weekly magazine (as an interviewee). This will not guarantee her a place in any academic canon, but it is not only “high culture” that is subject to canonisation. “Lower” strata of culture also have their own canonising mechanisms. Furthermore, Gáspár is a figure whose work might split into a range of such strata. Her *Hamlet* and Greek rewrites might occasionally put her on a reading list of an English, Drama, Cultural Studies or Comparative Literature department. Her work as a theatre manager and adaptation expert might draw the attention of Theatre Studies tutors and researchers.

As Gáspár’s play translates a personal dilemma into a ‘community play’, it betrays the author’s desperate attempt at self-justification in relation to her blindness in the pre-’56 period, alongside her renewed faith in socialism. The text may be regarded as a 1956 play in the sense that it deals with the (personal) cultural memory of ’56, the unspeakable troubles of and after ’56. Curiously, the action takes place right before and at the moment ’56 occurs, and the time of

writing is a few years after the events – it is a play that revolves around '56. It is clearly the ideological climate of the time of the writing of the play that Gáspár projects to have characterised the time before 1956. The thaw in Hungarian communist policies dates from later than Gábor Mike's character would suggest (apart from the more liberal and democratic ambitions of Imre Nagy's circle, which were defeated in 1956).

However, the avoidance of 1956 in the play is telling. The 'Hamlet' framework is utilised to forge a certain historical amnesia. This is a phenomenon similar to what Fischlin and Fortier, drawing on Mary Loeffelholz, notice about Charlotte Barnes's *The Forest Princess; or, Two Centuries Ago* (1844). This piece, blending the Pocahontas story with *The Tempest*, irons out obvious traces of the colonisation of American indigenous culture by Europeans (cf. Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 15). As regards Gáspár's text, it is the memory of 1956 – the 'real' one – that needs to be erased. An unnameable, haunting and disturbing memory is at the heart of this text. The 'obituary work' was only possible for Gáspár with the aid of Shakespeare (or rather the mechanism, the textual and institutional universe called 'Shakespeare'), 'who' has incessantly witnessed the nation's story from the Enlightenment on.

Chapter Two: Fictionalising *Hamlet*

I

Novelising *Hamlet*

Árpád Juhász's (1894–1945) rewriting of the *Hamlet* theme (1929) is an entirely forgotten text within Hungarian literature. The author himself is hardly remembered, although he worked in a variety of genres.¹⁵⁸ After discussing alterations of plot and character, the main focus in this chapter will be on two of the figures, Hamlet and Bumbala (Juhász's invention), who broaden the scope of investigation into a major ideological debate at the heart of the novel as well as to the chronotope dominating this narrative. Finally, the formal, rhetorical aspect of this rewriting-as-translation will be examined, with reference to the reworking of famous fragments.

Juhász's novel bears the same title made famous from Arany's and most other translations: *Hamlet, dán királyfi* [Hamlet, the Danish Prince], but the genre and the plot are different. The plot is historically relocated to Juhász's own time. It is not domesticated in terms of ethnicity to match the author's background (which would be a Hungarian setting in this case). Yet, the chronotope underlying the novel is worthy of attention. The concept of the *chronotope* was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin. The term literally means 'time-space', and it refers to meeting points of time and space, places that are infiltrated with time. Chronotopes, among which Bakhtin enumerates the encounter (for example, in the earliest – Greek and

¹⁵⁸ Juhász published several volumes of poetry (*Elfojtott könnyek* [Tears], *Köszöntés messziről* [Greeting from a Distance], *Búcsúzó* [Farewell], *Szabadság himnusza* [The Hymn of Liberty]); a couple of novels (*Aranypohár* [The Golden Glass], *Úri kaszinó* [Bourgeois Casino], *Muri-ház* [Party-house]); a collection of short stories (*Gobelin*); a comedy (*Vörös majom* [Red Monkey]), in collaboration with the similarly unknown Emil Ruskó. In addition to this, he also worked as a journalist. After years of wandering in different European countries (he emigrated in 1919), he worked for *Kassai Napló* [Kassa Times] and, from 1931, for *Zsidó Újság* [Jewish Gazette] on his return to his homeland.

Latin – novels), the road (for example, in the *picaresque* novel), the castle (for example, in the Gothic novel), the provincial town (in many nineteenth-century novels) and the threshold (for example, in Dostoyevsky), are “organizing centres for the fundamental narrative events of the novel” (Bakhtin 1981, p. 250). Juhász’s *Hamlet* story is set in Scandinavia and other parts of Europe, following the travels of the characters. Even though the action does not take place in Hungary, the book can be read as an almost allegorical reflection on the politics and the spirit of Juhász’s day, albeit with relevance to Europe rather than Hungary exclusively. This makes the chronotope pluricultural, a translation in a metaphorical sense. The author’s preface dates from September 1929. This is very close to the outbreak of the American stock market crisis. However, as it antecedes Black Thursday (24 October), one cannot establish a close relationship between the two. The novel is set against the backdrop of post-World War I Europe, with the atmosphere suggesting the dawning of the Depression era.

Translating plot and character

Juhász’s work precedes more recent capitalist versions of the *Hamlet* theme, and may well be the first one in the line including ‘corporate *Hamlets*’ such as Sárközi’s play, Aki Kaurismäki’s film *Hamlet Goes Business* (1987) or Michael Almereyda’s *Hamlet* movie (2000). The royal family thus has been translated into a capitalist *entrepreneur* family, and given one of the most common Danish family names: Larsen. It is a parodistic element that it is the corn trade (the trade providing one’s quotidian, and thus, being one of the most powerful capitalist industries) that the Larsens have been involved in for a couple of centuries in Copenhagen. Claude Larsen, the Claudius figure of the novel, is a businessman

bearing the epithet ‘the Napoleon of business’ (“az üzlet Napóleonja”, p. 39).¹⁵⁹ Having recently married his brother’s widow, he devises a plan in order to monopolise the corn industry in the region. His aim is to spread the news that there are not enough crops available on the market, and thus to get people to buy the stock they have accumulated. Of course, Fortimbraa (the Fortinbras figure) is the head of the main rivalling corn company (dominating the Swedish and Norwegian markets). The Fortimbraa company is clever enough not to fall into the trap set up by Larsen. All this plotting takes place in the vein of social darwinism (in Herbert Spencer’s understanding of the concept). As the educated and rational Horáce explains it to his fellow-employees (that is the night wardens): “Harc a hatalomért. Egyiknek el kell hullania” [This is a struggle for power. One of them has to fall] (p. 15).

This is the environment Hamlet lives in. There is no reference to his returning from Wittemberg (sic!) at all; however, he wants to go there, and is persuaded by his mother and Claude not to do so. Claude even makes him deputy to Rágnhild (the Polonius character). The truth about his father’s death is revealed to him by his father’s ghost appearing in his room at night; and the means by which the murder happened is disclosed by a medium. Hamlet – to some extent inadvertantly – starts his revenge with the performance of his play, *Egérfogó* [The Mousetrap]. Hamlet’s mother summons him after the show for a discussion. In contrast with the ‘original’, Rágnhild is not killed by Hamlet; he only lies to his mother about having killed Rágnhild, at which moment Rágnhild’s sudden collapse and death is reported. After this, Claude sends him to England, but – importantly – not to have him murdered, just to get him out of the way. While in

¹⁵⁹ In the text he is presented as Larsen Claude as Hungarian has the family name first – the same applies to the rest of the names in the novel. All quotations are from Juhász 1929, in the present author’s translation.

England, Hamlet receives Horatio's telegram about Lia's suicide. She jumped into the lake in Hamlet's garden, without leaving a farewell letter, and no corpse was found. Hamlet is easily convinced by the notorious good-for-nothings, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to go to Paris (from whence the penniless twosome had been summoned) instead of staying on in England. In Paris Hamlet makes his escape from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (he is fed up with their materialistic and dishonest ways). On the train he takes to Hamburg he meets Laert (a largely positive character in this rewrite), who breaks the news about Claude's bankruptcy. In a rather prosaic turn of the plot, the Larsens are forced to move to the countryside because it is cheaper, and they go on to receive a slight annual allowance from Fortimbreaa. There is no massacre at the end, not a drop of blood is spilt. The novel has a more individualist closure, which, however, interrogates the social importance of such a disaffiliated poetic soul as Hamlet. Hamlet is puzzled that all the revenge has been conducted already by Fortimbreaa; he feels useless, he has no prospects. There is no indication of Hamlet's death in the novel. The last news about him is what Laert gathers from the ticket inspector: he got off the train in Cologne. The tragic element is almost entirely eliminated from the story, although the melancholy of Hamlet's character is retained.

Most characters derive from *Hamlet*; it is only a few names, such as those of Hamlet and Ophelia, that are either unchanged or only slightly modified. (The name *Ophélia* is spelt with an accent on *e* (*ékezet*) here, and, similarly to Gáspár's character, she is often called by her nickname, Lia.) "The Danish crop king" ("dán terménykirály", p. 14) is not a man of words. Unlike his Shakespearean counterpart, who speaks in cleverly constructed tirades, this 1920's Claudius figure is embarrassed when he is supposed to say more than one or two sentences. It is striking that Mrs Larsen does not have a first name herself; the name

Gertrude is never mentioned. The nameless wife is, however, not so unfortunate; she is a strong and desirable woman. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are ‘reincarnated’ under the same names. Their character traits are very similar to those in *Hamlet*; though a flirtation with Mrs Larsen is added (especially on Guildenstern’s part). This is, however, initiated and encouraged by Mrs Larsen. Polonius is turned into Pál Rágnhild. The figure of Reynaldo (in Hungarian translations: Rajnárd) innovatively turns up as Olaf Reynald, a private detective. Rágnhild visits him in his office, and commissions him to check up on Laert. Voltimand’s name is retained, and Cornelius becomes Kornél Riisen. The clerks doing their night duty in the Larsen office are the ‘translated’ versions of the sentinels. Barnardo (usually Bernardo in Hungarian versions) is ‘re-christened’ as Bernát Glahn, but the others call him Bernardó, because he speaks Italian and Spanish fluently (thus the Latin ending). Under the name Ferenc Krag one may recognise Francisco. Marcell Knick recalls Marcellus’s character.

The most sympathetically drawn character appears to be Horáce (the Horatio figure of the novel). This is more of a time for Horatios than Hamlets: reliable and modest businessmen and employees, both rational and intuitive, loyal to their families, who do not meddle in public affairs too much but participate as much as they need in order to be successful. They may be mediocrities, but this is a time in which the *aurea mediocritas* can flourish.

There are a few striking differences in terms of plot development. As mentioned above, Rágnhild-Polonius is not killed by Hamlet; the eponymous character only lies to his mother (when he is summoned by her after the performance) that he had just killed him. Rágnhild is not hiding there, and – probably to further emphasise the importance of spiritual forces in the novel – the news of Rágnhild’s death is broken right after Hamlet’s false confession. (Perhaps

Hamlet's obsession with spiritualism may account for this coincidence.) In fact, Rágnhild died of a stroke. When Hamlet is sent to England, he does not want to leave without Ophélie, he sends a letter to her by his servant, Bumbala, asking her to accompany him. Having just lost her father, she is not prepared to go. Hamlet feels devastated after her death.

The frame of the narrative is worthy of attention in itself. At the outset we are taken to an isolated, cold and dark place nearby the Norwegian fjords, where a vicar enters an ill-lit shop, smelling of lard, herrings, petroleum and cheese. He is told there that the week-old Stavanger Gazette reports an imminent shortage of crops. This is one of the false alarms for which Claude is responsible. Tivadar Bugge, the shopkeeper, and Gladsun, the sailor, set out for Copenhagen with the priest's accompanying letter to his son, Horáce Nielsen, who works for Larsen & Co, and can hopefully help them to purchase some corn. At the very end of the novel the action moves back to this little village, where the arrival of Horáce is celebrated by his parents.¹⁶⁰ The fact that this novel, which is on a cosmopolitan scale, begins and ends in an *ultima Thule* may imply a confirmation of a system of domestic values, especially those related to the family and a sense of community.

In contrast with Gáspár's play, many scenes or shorter passages of the play are translated into episodes in the novel. After the abovementioned exposition we encounter a couple of clerks in the Larsen office. Together with Horatio, they are discussing the state of affairs, as they do in the play. The motif of demagogy (which is so important to Claudius's relationship to the court and the people in *Hamlet*) appears when Horatio, in a conversation with the office workers, assesses the state of affairs saying that in a war the crowd always loses, it is only the king

¹⁶⁰ Horáce explains what happened to his previous firm, as he now works for Fortimbraa.

who can win. The people are there to keep cheering him. Anyone who keeps quiet counts as a traitor and should be oppressed.¹⁶¹

Horáce Nielsen, who is introduced as a devoted spiritualist, tells the leavers to close the door because someone might be walking around the rooms. This element substitutes for the guards sensing the presence of the ghost in the play, though it is much less emphasised here, probably because it is the psychically unstable Hamlet who is meant to be facing the ghost.

Let us have a look at a few examples of reimagined plot elements or passages. When we first see the Larsen family, they are sat in the living room after dinner. Claude admits he has had some worrying intuitions lately. When Mrs Larsen asks him whether this has been going on since the wedding, Hamlet reposts, “Ó, azért nem érdemes. A koporsó fölött is lehet lakodalmat tartani” [There’s no point in having bad feelings about that. One can have a wedding above a coffin.] (p. 18). This is an obvious allusion to “funeral bak’d meats” that “coldly furnish[ed] forth the marriage tables” (discussed between Hamlet and Horatio, I/2; 180-181).

Claude sending off Voltimand and Kornél Riisen to the rival company as his ambassadors is an important part of the novel. His dictatorial method is apparent when they return with no success. Claude certainly does not give them any freedom to try to save the situation. Competing political trends of the time are also reflected on when the exemplary capitalist entrepreneur sends two of his employees to Stockholm, instructing them not to try to negotiate with socialists.

Polonius is mocked for his old age much in the manner of Shakespeare and Arany. Hamlet’s request to Horatio to watch Claudius’ body language during the performance also features here, with Hamlet stressing Horáce’s true friendship as

¹⁶¹ Horáce and the clerks discuss the state of affairs, as Horatio and the guards do in Act I Scene 1 of the play.

well as his poverty (the latter is an addition). Hamlet invites Ophélie to their box in the theatre (where he sits with Mr and Mrs Larsen), and he caresses her hand during the performance. He continues this behaviour after his mother and stepfather leave, to Rágnhild's great pleasure (Rágnhild would like his daughter to marry into the family). Rather innovatively, it happens in a night bar where Hamlet and Horatio go after the *première* of his play, that he grabs the flute from one of the musicians and instructs Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to play it when they urge him to go to see his mother.

European identity in the making: a perspective on the chronotope through the characters of Hamlet, Bumbala and the Bringtowns

Juhász's Hamlet is a paranoid character, obsessed with spiritualism and a belief in the supernatural (not in the sense of organised religion or doctrines), the existence of another world, and its constant interference with this world. This might be one of the reasons why he does not properly engage in 'worldly' matters. Thus, one of the culturally most important aspects of the novel is the *séance* during which the ghost of Hamlet's father confirms – through the clairvoyant – that it was with poison that Claude killed him.¹⁶² Spiritualism, a cultural practice originating in America (it started in 1848 with Katherine and Margaret Fox), spread to Europe in the mid-19th century (travelling mediums appeared in Paris, Warsaw, and Berlin), and it reached England in 1852 (cf. Owen 1989, p. 73). The passage related to the table-turning session includes a description of the physical behaviour of the medium. There are several technical details reported, such as Hamlet holding the medium's hand so as to suggest to her who the wanted person is, instead of telling

¹⁶² Such events are common in the Hungarian fiction of the period; a well-known scene occurs in Kálmán Mikszáth's 1900 novel *Különös házasság* [A Weird Marriage] (relevant scene: Mikszáth 1961, pp. 44-52).

her his name and the question (in front of other participants), since he wanted to keep all of this a secret. There is a colonel who is in charge of the whole event; it is he who gives orders to the clairvoyant and maintains discipline in the room. She is fed chocolate after the table-turning session. This might be to renew her strength, or simply to reward her. As Alex Owen points out in relation to late-Victorian spiritualism, “public mediums felt more secure with a male protector” (Owen 1989, p. 59). At this time – in British spiritualism at least – the psychic quite often had a male protector – an older, authoritative figure, usually the husband or father – present supervising the sitting (Owen 1989, pp. 59-61).¹⁶³ The prototype of the psychic is a young girl; the cultural historian Jenny Hazlegrove places emphasis on the “passivity, domesticity, simplicity and her personal proximity to Mary, the exemplary mother” (Hazlegrove 2000, p. 176). The parallel with Mary is not emphasised in the novel; yet the (unnamed) girl appears to conform to the stereotype. As Alex Owen notes, some of the really spectacular *séances* were “pure theatre, complete with special effects, pathos, and timing” (1989, p. 55). This particular *séance*-spectacle in Juhász’s novel may be seen as an essentially theatrical event prefiguring the mousetrap: the performance of Hamlet’s play. Even a novelised *Hamlet* can have its marked theatrical aspects.

The central protagonist represents a neurotic Hamlet as he illustrates many of the phobias of the age. He is afraid alone in the dark, he is the kind of person who always looks over his shoulder (this also has something to do with his belief in the spirits of the dead being present). Some aspects of Hamlet’s current life are dismissed in terms of childhood events. Apart from not being fond of eating in general, he does not eat meat because as a five-year-old he saw a large pike struggling with their kitchen staff who were trying to clean it before cooking it

¹⁶³ On the basis of accounts of both late Victorian and inter-war English spiritualism, in terms of technicalities Juhász’s portrayal of a table-turning session is closer in spirit to the former.

outdoors. A couple of years later Ophélie persuaded him to try some goose liver, which made him sick. After that, he never touched meat again. Juhász's Hamlet is also a forerunner of the principled vegetarian:

Nem meggyőződésből teszem. Egyszerűen utálok. Különben azt hiszem, bizonyosan véték is a húsevés, mert hiszen le kell ölni az állatot.
[I don't do it out of conviction. I simply hate it (meat). Besides, I think it must be wrong to eat meat because it involves the killing of an animal.] (p. 126)

This psychologically damaged Hamlet figure also reinforces another strand of traditional *Hamlet* criticism, namely the myth of Hamlet as a poet and playwright. Having published poems and short stories in the best Danish periodicals before, Juhász's Hamlet has recently finished his first play when the action of the novel begins (and he is collecting phrases for the second one). This is *Egérfogó* [The Mousetrap], which he actually composed before being informed about the way his father died. This is a major modification to the framework of the plot provided by the Shakespearean play, where the protagonist adapts an already existing play only after the arrival of the players – on the spur of the moment, so to speak. The basic mousetrap story seems identical to that in Hamlet: set in Vienna, featuring Gonzago, Bapstista, and so on. It is a professional theatre company (called the Jansen Company) that mounts his work, presumably in a middleclass theatre. The company visit him and ask him if they could put his new play on as there is some copyright problem with Bíró, the Hungarian author whose play they were already rehearsing. Hamlet gives his consent, and they engage in a rehearsed reading right in the author's presence. Hamlet's famous instructions to the players, however, are not delivered during this rehearsal, but on the day of the *première*. The *amoroso* of the company is annoyed by what he perceives as a patronising gesture, and tells Hamlet not to interfere with matters outside his province. (This is an example of letting other characters challenge

Hamlet in the rewrite, modifying the familiar material.) Before the performance begins, we are given an insight into the sociology of theatre reception as Hamlet is introduced to the critics. When he is not courteous (that is, adulatory) enough, the director quickly drags him away and makes an excuse saying that Hamlet is a debutant author. The performance is not interrupted when Mr and Mrs Larsen take their leave; it continues and is hailed as a great success. As Hamlet flicks through *The Times* on his arrival to London, he finds his play mentioned even there. This again reinforces a sense of Europeanness – no matter where a valuable artefact comes into being, it will be appreciated in Europe as a shared treasure. Hamlet himself is certainly presented as a broad-minded, well-educated polyglot European intellectual. We are told that he has not spoken English since secondary school, which indicates that he has studied English. As Martha Lil, the American girl he meets in England, observes,

Az a szinte megdöbbentő és tiszteletreméltó magukban, hogy valamennyien legalább két-három nyelvet beszélnek. Mi amerikaiak és velünk együtt az angolok is csak egy nyelvet tudunk, de azt aztán csodálatosan tökéletesen, az angolt. Azért csodálatosan, mert abban sem találnék semmi különöset, ha azt hallanám egy amerikaitól, hogy nekünk beszélni sem kell, az európai és minden más nép anélkül is köteles bennünket megérteni. Ez az oka annak, hogy soha nem tanulunk meg semmilyen más nyelvet. Az amerikai és angol üzletember elve, hogy aki érintkezni akar vele, tanuljon meg angolul.

[It is almost shocking, and certainly worthy of respect, that you all speak at least two or three languages. We Americans, alongside the English, only speak one language, but that one we speak wonderfully well: English. Wonderfully because I wouldn't be surprised at all if I were told by an American that we don't even have to speak: the Europeans and all other nations are supposed to understand us anyway. This is why we never learn any other languages. The principle of American and English businessmen is that whoever wants to get in contact with them should learn English.] (pp. 139-140)

As Rosencrantz remarks, “A franciák általában könnyebben hajlamosak a haladásra. Az angol kissé nehézkes. Darabos.” [Generally speaking the French are more inclined to progress. The English are more gauche. Gawky.] (p. 140).

In the novel one perceives a mapping of the borders of Europe. What is important is on which side of the (imaginary) border you are: East-Central Europe is in, while Bumbala (whose ethnic origin is unclear) is not fully integrated. Newspapers reach even the Norwegian fjords within a week or two, and the mirage on the Hungarian 'Great Plain' is reported in the papers. In sum, however, developmental differences between various parts of Europe are toned down, while an opposition between the cultured Europe and America as a country of business and cunning (to the extent of draining other countries' sources) is emphasised:

Mióta Európában megszűnt a borzalmas vérontás, elcsöndesedett az irtózat szörnyű kataklizmája, tömegével özönlöttek át a frissen meggazdagodott amerikaiak Európába, hogy megtekintsék azt a földet, melynek vére révén szerezték új vagyonukat.

[Since the horrific bloodshed stopped in Europe, and the terrible cataclysm of terror calmed down, crowds of newly enriched Americans flooded Europe in order to see the land at the cost of whose blood they acquired their new fortune.] (p. 123)

The inscription of *Hamlet* with early 20th century racial stereotypes represents a denigration of the *Hamlet* theme in the literal sense. This takes place through a most interesting novelty to the basic story of *Hamlet*: the character of Hamlet's obedient black servant, Bumbala. His name seems to be a parodistic attempt at inventing an African-sounding name.¹⁶⁴ Bumbala is a loyal servant to Hamlet. He is afraid of Claude, who used to push him about in the corridor, and once he even kicked Bumbala down the stairs. When we first see Bumbala in the novel, he is sitting at Hamlet's feet, as if in the position of a domestic watchdog. Since Hamlet is intensely paranoid, especially at night, Bumbala sleeps in the same room. He makes Hamlet's bed, prepares his coffee, brings in his breakfast, double-checks his tie, delivers his correspondence to Ophelia, and so on. How Bumbala is perceived by Hamlet is presumably typical of the period. Hamlet

¹⁶⁴ There are a number of characters made up by Juhász, such as Horatio's father (the priest) and the shopkeeper.

exemplifies the superficial interest elite white male European intellectuals had in African-Americans. Bumbala is not seen as a person, but as an exotic creature, a ‘son of nature’ as opposed to the ‘culture’ of his place of service. (This dichotomy has been destabilised by deconstruction and postcolonialism; here it is only used to describe a paradigm in the novel.) Bumbala is very fond of bananas; he is rewarded with a banana after he learns a new letter of the alphabet. He is silenced with a banana when he is about to say something at the actors’ rehearsal.

Bumbala’s Hungarian, or rather, his civilised language (which is a fictional representation of Hamlet’s mother tongue – Danish – in this novel), is less than impeccable. Hamlet tries to teach him the civilised language, and Bumbala is attentive, but has little aptitude; he speaks a broken Hungarian. In this respect, his character may be reminiscent of Caliban, though Bumbala does not master his owner’s language as well as Caliban. The night before the ghost appears, Hamlet watches him with the gaze of a socially and culturally superior person. “Olyan fekete vagy, hogyha leoltanók a lámpát, azt hinném, te vagy az éjszaka. Egyszer verset fogok írni rólad” [You are so black that if we switched off the light I would believe you are the night. One day I will write a poem about you], says Hamlet (p. 23). Today this may sound racist; at that time Hamlet’s stance may have seemed more humanistic: showing a modicum of pity and care, perhaps even tolerance. Hamlet sees Bumbala as an artefact of nature, an object of beauty, a source of poetic inspiration. Hamlet’s patronising attitude contrasts sharply with Claude’s overt aggression when he makes use of Bumbala as a scapegoat. The narrator uses the method of psycho-narration – the least complex way of rendering one’s mind – as he attempts to render Bumbala’s thinking.¹⁶⁵ In the following passage stereotyping reemerges:

¹⁶⁵ For the concept of psycho-narration see Cohn 1978, pp. 11-12 and 21-57.

A néger szolga megvetette már mindkettőjük ágát, aztán odakuporodott a kályha mellé. Talán ő is olvasott volna, de még nem jutott el az ábécé-be burkolózó homályos rejtelmekig s otthoni apró dalokat is énekelt volna, de félt a gazdájától, nem mert csipetnyi hangokat sem kiejteni. Csak ült és nézte a kályha lángjait.

[The Negro servant laid the beds for both of them, then he curled up against the stove. Maybe he would have liked to read, but he hadn't got as far as the obscure mysteries wrapped in the alphabet. He would have sung little songs from home as well, but he was afraid of his lord, and he didn't dare to let out the slightest note. He was just sitting, staring at the flames of the stove.] (p. 23)

The narrator stresses Bumbala's fear as well. His only comfort in the scene seems to be the stove (something homely, cosy). When Hamlet initiates a conversation, he offers to sing a tune to the poem. However, after the two share a roar of laughter, Hamlet goes on to treat Bumbala in the usual way, that is, as an oddity:

[Ny]isd ki a szád. Olyan fehérek a fogaid, mintha kararai márványból faragta volna az apád. A szemeid olyan fényesek, mint az éjszakában a csillagok. Kitől kaptad a szemeidet? Most úgy ülsz ott a kályha előtt, mint az asszony, aki este lefekvés előtt széthullajtotta gyöngyeit és a kályha fényénél akarja összekaparni őket. Ezt fölírom barátom.

[Open your mouth. Your teeth are so white as though your father had carved them from marble from Karara. Your eyes are as bright as stars at night. From whom did you get your eyes? You are sitting now in front of the stove like the wife who, having dropped her pearls, wants to collect them by the light of the stove. I'll jot this down, my friend.] (p. 23)

The blackness of Bumbala's body and the whiteness of his teeth are juxtaposed in this one-sided conversation (it is mainly Hamlet speaking). This is a typical example of binary oppositions that have shaped Western thought in the last two thousand years. The fact itself that Hamlet's gaze partitions the body asserts that an objectification – almost fetishisation – of the body is taking place. (Queer theorists might find something slightly homoerotic about this scene as a male scrutinises another male body, gaining aesthetic pleasure from it.) It is also ironic how poetry is shown in the making, as if sudden inspiration needs to be immediately scribbled down. It is only jokingly that Hamlet calls Bumbala his friend – this is no more than a conversational phrase, or Hamlet might even be addressing himself here. It is Bumbala to whom Hamlet reads out his poem

entitled “Halál” [Death] (a rewriting of the great soliloquy), but this only happens because there is nobody else around. As the omniscient narrator concludes,

Bumbalát nem érdekelte túlságosan a dolog. Mindegy, gondolta, ezt is el lehet viselni s ezért csak igent intett a fejével. Hamletnek sem volt túlságosan fontos a kis néger véleménye a versről, de fel kellett olvasnia valakinek. Mindegy, hogy kinek, Bumbalának, X-nek, Y-nak.

[Bumbala wasn't too interested. It doesn't matter, anyway, he thought, one can bear this as well, so he just nodded in agreement. The little negro's opinion of the poem wasn't very important to Hamlet, either, but he needed to read it out to someone. It didn't matter to whom, whether to Bumbala, X or Y.] (p. 91)

This scene suggests a lack of real understanding between the two human beings who are sharply separated by social constraints, let alone their native cultures. Bumbala's simple inner life is once again emphasised further on, as opposed to Hamlet's confused muttering to himself, repeating the first three lines of his poem to himself. On this occasion psycho-narration approaches the limit of quoted monologue as the *inquit* phrase “bizonyosan azt gondolta” [he must have thought] introduces Bumbala's alleged thoughts:

Bumbala megtanulta, hogy sosem szabad csodálkozni. Mindig szó nélkül engedelmeskedett. Eloltotta a kávéfőzőben a szeszt és a holmikat szépen elrakta a helyükre. Kapott egy banánt és elkezdte majszolni. Bizonyosan azt gondolta, az élet szép és kellemes. A banán jó.

[Bumbala has learnt not to be surprised by anything. He always obeyed without a word. He extinguished the spirit-lamp in the coffee-maker, and put everything back where it belonged. He received a banana and started to munch it. He must have thought life was beautiful and pleasant. Banana is good.] (p. 93)

If Hamlet was concerned for Bumbala, he could take him to England with him. He does not even consider that. Hamlet says farewell to him, and tells Bumbala he can still make coffee for him every evening so that he does not forget the skill he had acquired. It would seem, Hamlet is not averse to the semi-ritualistic worshipping of himself in his absence. When Bumbala asks Hamlet what will happen to him while he is away, Hamlet plainly answers: “Semmi. Itt maradsz és megvársz, amíg visszajövök” [Nothing. You stay here, and wait for me until I

come home.] (p. 119). The narrator's tone which captures their thought directly is not necessarily biased. Juhász might be caricaturing the superficiality of the elite in this respect.¹⁶⁶

It is due to Hamlet's paranoia that he travels a lot, all across Europe. Travel represents one of his means of escapism. This is how he gets to Hungary, too. The narrator, from Hamlet's perspective, clearly describes Hungary as Eastern Europe, presumably adopting for his fiction the attitude the author himself must have come across on his travels. It is beneficial from a Cultural Studies perspective to look at how Budapest, the capital of the author's mother country, is portrayed, whether the text "hold[s] up a mirror" to the author's mother country. Hamlet was advised to go abroad by his doctor as a result of a nervous collapse in his younger days. On his travels he visited Budapest as well. He experienced one of his most frightening encounters with what he calls "the Mystery" – "a Titok" – (which may be interpreted as a parodic version of the Ghost). When he was walking across one of the bridges on his own, he felt that somebody squeezed his hand. He looked around and saw no-one (p. 25). This memory influenced Hamlet's fears back home later on. Setting this scene in Budapest is a choice that can be interpreted in various ways. It might indicate that Hamlet can unconsciously understand and sympathetically assume some of the sorrows of the Hungarians. The mysterious gesture on the bridge may suggest some sort of spiritual kinship between the fate of Hungary and that of Hamlet.¹⁶⁷ It might be interpreted as a nudge to the Hungarian reader: *de te fabula narratur*. Among the Hungarian references in the novel are a play by a certain Bíró, and a newspaper

¹⁶⁶ Bumbala may also be seen as a potential political allegory of how the Hungarian nation was treated in Trianon in 1920 (as part of the peace treaties signed near Paris after WW1).

¹⁶⁷ The debate on Europeaness in the novel may have been informed by the complex cultural identity of the author. He came from a predominantly Hungarian-speaking part of Slovakia (namely the town of Kassa), which used to belong to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

reference to a mirage in the Hortobágy. Bíró is a common Hungarian family name, yet there is no famous author of this name; this detail is entirely fictitious. The latter is a stereotypical Hungarian *lieu de mémoire*, a must-see-in-one's lifetime. Juhász envisages Hungary as part of the European intellectual circulation (though this might be just a case of wishful thinking).

A mirror is also held up to London in the narrative, as Hamlet is sent there, accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet meets an American family (a father with two daughters). They exchange their impressions of England, and the Americans express their opinions on Europe. One of the questions that arise is whether Britain is part of Europe:

Az angolok nem számítanak, azok csak félig európaiak, mert földrajzi vonatkozásban magukhoz tartoznak, de tulajdonképpen szigetlakók s ugyanolyanok, mint mi.

[The English don't count, they are only half-Europeans, because in geographical terms they belong to themselves, yet in fact they are islanders and they are just like us.] (p. 139)

This quotation seems to fit the never-ending debate regarding whether the Anglo-American or the European connection should be stressed when it comes to Britain's cultural and political affiliations. It is revealing how these Americans view Europe and Britain. Yet, we should bear in mind that these 'American' views were constructed by an East-Central European author, so it is more of a case of how such a writer perceives or envisages American views on Europe rather than anything else. The members of the Bringtown family have different opinions. What Mr Bringtown is most interested in about London, besides being enchanted by European wines, is the futures market in cotton. His elder daughter, Martha Lil, appreciates European culture for its roots. June Ann, the emancipated younger daughter, finds that European women have very little involvement in sports. As she sharply remarks, "Itt még mindig ott tartanak, hogy a legszebb női sport a kézimunka" [Here they still haven't got any further than seeing

needlework as the most beautiful female sport] (p. 140). She misses her private aircraft, and suggests that emancipation is far more developed in America than in Europe. Juhász also makes sure that we encounter a more superficial side to the Americans' view on Europe.

Paris comes across as the heart of Europe. This is the place where most characters wish to be. It is not only Laert who made himself a home there, but Rosencrantz and Guildenstern also long for Paris, and Hamlet is very easy to convince to go there on a trip rather than staying in London. They all have different motives, of course. There are short, yet vividly descriptive, references to Hamburg and Lübeck; the former is said to have the best panorama in the world (together with that of Alster), while the latter is praised as a city of the guilds, with a rich past.

The novel abounds in miscellaneous cultural references, which makes this rewriting of *Hamlet* topical for the second decade of the twentieth century. *Blackbottom* (an American dance from the twenties) and *The Kingstown Monkey* are played in the night bar where Hamlet goes to celebrate the success of his play. The card games that the clerks are playing on night duty, such as *patience*, *makao* and *rummy*, are also characteristic of the period. Thinking of local references, *Thorgaden* and *Aftenbladet*, and the *Jansen* Company are mentioned; so are the fishmonger and the butcher from a certain *Haderslev*. Juhász intends to make the cultural *realia* more or less authentic. However, he is not preoccupied with precision. He aims at inventing cultural items more or less authentic, credible enough, yet not necessarily identical with the real-life ones. *Aftenbladet*, rather than *Aftenbladet*, was a left-leaning Copenhagen newspaper, priding itself on its journalists, such as the writer Herman Bang (1857-1912), who, in the 1890s, excelled with his unusually subjective and impressionistic writing, and the

anarchist and socialist Jean Jaques Ipsen (1857-1936). (There is a Norwegian newspaper of the same name, which is still running. *Aftenbladet*, which is closer to the form given by Juhász, is the name of a Swedish newspaper with a national circulation.) *Haderslev* is a city on the Jutland peninsula, the ending *-n* makes the form definite (the Haderslev). There is a street called Thorgade in the Northern part of Copenhagen, although the name might have been inspired by similar streetnames in other places.¹⁶⁸ The ending *-n* again signifies the definite form. It appears that Juhász gave himself great liberties in terms of the linguistic and cultural re-creation of late 1920s' Denmark.

Reworking fragments and reiterating fragmentariness

As examples of formal and, at the same time, ideologically based rewriting, there are some awkward quasi-aphoristic sentences that appear to imitate the fragmentariness of the 'original' (discussed in Part One Chapter Three); it is as if a *Hamlet* rewrite should also contain truisms of its own. One of these is connected to Hamlet, while in London, although it is not directly spoken by him. His concerns are narrated as follows: "Hamlet [...] csapzottan fetrengett a keserü mártásban, amit élete Nagy Szakácsa főzött, hogy elevenen megforgassa benne" [Hamlet, bedraggled, was wallowing in the bitter sauce cooked by the Great Cook of his life in order to spin him around in it] (p. 139). In addition, Guildenstern's idiom is peppered with truisms. For example, he jokes that marriage is like a menu: when you are unmarried you can eat *à la carte*, but once you are married it's always the 'meal of the day' (p. 131). Hamlet's rather clumsy poem to Ophelia – another frequently quoted passage – is also paraphrased and mocked in

¹⁶⁸ The reference to the name of the god of thunder in Scandinavian mythology, embedded in the name, is most probably meaningless to the average Hungarian reader.

the novel. And here is the rewrite of the ‘great soliloquy’ as a poem written by Hamlet Larsen:

Halál

Ez itt a kérdés: lenni vagy nem lenni!
Oly mély a lélek, mint a tó és mennyi
Titok sötétlik? Tenger fájdalom?
Vajjon úgy jobb, ha tűri száz halom
Tüskéit, vagy nyílvesszőket farag
És szétzúz mindent, ami bú, harag?
Be jó is volna holtan elterülni,
A halál hintájában hátradülni,
Szunnyadni, mert az álom végtelen,
Amíg a testemet elengedem!
De van-e álom az alvás mögött,
Friss sóhajok, nagy házak és ködök,
Vagy börtön az csak, gúnynak ostora,
Anyá, anyá, de zordon mostoha?

Bár súlyos terhet hord a váll s az ész,
Még sincs oly dőre, ki eldobni kész,
Az öntudat a gyávaságnak kútja
S az ember önmagát is meghazudva
Csúf átkot szór, amíg a lélek rebben,
Ha árnyat ejt az örök ismeretlen
És visszafordul, mert nagy út az, ó!
Ki későn indul, annak is korán
Virrad fel a rejtélyes tartomány,
Ahonnan nem tér meg több utazó.

[Death

This is the question: to be or not to be!
The soul is as deep as a lake, and so many
darkening secrets! A sea of sorrows!¹⁶⁹
Is it better to endure the thorns of a hundred mounds,
Or to make arrows, and crush everything that is sadness and anger?
How good it would be to lie dead,
To lean back in the swing of death,
To doze, since the dream is endless
While I release my body
But is there a dream beneath sleeping,
Fresh sighs, large houses and fogs,
Or is it a prison, the scourge of *malice*,
Mother, mother, yet severe stepmother?

Although the shoulders and the mind bear a heavy burden,

¹⁶⁹ Juhász’s text has question marks at the end of these two sentences; these are rhetorical questions that draw attention to something rather than actually posing a question, this is why they have been translated into English as exclamations.

There is nobody as silly as to drop it.
Consciousness is the well of *cowardice*,
And the human curses, as s/he cheats even him/herself
While the soul flies, if the eternal unknown leaves a shadow.
And s/he turns back, because, oh, the road is long!
The mysterious *province*, from which no more travellers return
Wakes even him up early who leaves late.] (p. 92, my emphases)

The rhyme scheme is simple: aabb...etc. There is a reversal of the first two clauses in comparison with the ‘source’. The approximate translation does not show that the ending is emotionally as effective, because the closing part is “from which no more travellers return”, resonating with Arany’s translation of Shakespeare’s line (see Appendix Three). The motif of the lake in the poem may derive from the life of Juhász’s Hamlet, who was frightened of the lake in their garden. (Later in the plot Ophélia also drowns in that lake.) The words italicised are important because they are taken literally from Arany’s canonical version of the great soliloquy, and they further exemplify the fragmentary afterlife of Arany’s *Hamlet*. The poem by this Hungarian-speaking Danish Hamlet also exemplifies the rich afterlife of Arany’s translation, and his ‘rendition’ of the great soliloquy as a *pars pro toto* carrying Hamletianness.

It is apparent that the novel rewrites the play almost scene by scene, retaining most of the famous ones. This serves as a further instance of the metonymic afterlife of *Hamlet*. This version of the *Hamlet* story also succeeds in mapping out Hamlet’s Europe, which – with its various cities and travellers – becomes the central chronotope of the novel. However, not all characters are treated equally. Some, such as Bumbala, are denigrated; others, such as the Bringtowns, are relegated to the position of outsiders, who do not intrinsically belong there. In this respect, there is no major discrepancy between the treatment of the characters who have entered Europe for work, those who have come out of necessity or coercion (Bumbala) and those who see Europe as a commodity or a

potential market for business (Bringtown – a possible telling name). They are both presented as strangers, as outsiders. Perhaps Bringtown's views receive more emphasis, as he is directly quoted in dialogues. Bumbala, on the other hand, hardly speaks at all; his thoughts are mainly rendered by the narrator via psycho-narration or quoted monologue. He is presented as having naive and primitive obsessions, such as food, basic safety, and warmth. One of the reasons is, as we are reminded, that Bumbala does not speak Hamlet's language.

II

Two fictional *Hamlet* performances

This section will engage in the discussion of two contemporary theatrical short stories, both revolving around a *Hamlet* production. Hamlet appears in both of them: in one, rather tangibly, in the other, through his words and actions interpreted by other characters.

Having examined above an arguably racist and paranoid Hamlet, who is a poet-playwright, let us move on to another stereotypical interpretation of the Shakespearean character: the actor-Hamlet. *Hamlet* is a major intertext for a short story concerning theatrical life by Miklós Tóth-Máthé (born 1936), who used to be an actor himself. In a collection of short stories whose title piece is “Hamlet építkezik” [Hamlet Is Building a House], Tóth-Máthé provides a series of variations of different plays (including Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *King Lear*). The stories are all related to performances and/or their reception; they all have a humorous kernel in the mode of the Boccaccian *novella*. The one based on *Hamlet*, dating from 1975, features Adorján Perc as its central protagonist, a Hungarian actor whose delivery of Hamlet is noted all across Europe. There is no clear indication in the text as to

where in Hungary the theatre company is located; however, the atmosphere suggests a provincial environment.¹⁷⁰ There have been over a hundred performances, and the production is still sold out with extra chairs being brought in. Critics and artists from foreign countries travel to see the performance. A team of Finnish theatre-makers recently visited the playhouse and, at the time the main plot occurs, a French director is visiting the theatre to study Perc's interpretation of Hamlet.

However, Perc has to deal with such worldly matters as meeting the craftsman who is in charge of the construction of his new house. His wife, Rózsi, demands an onion-domed villa, though he himself would be happy enough with a country cottage reminding him of his childhood. Rózsi only appears in the story in Perc's memory, as a character narrated by another character, yet she recalls the ancient *topos* of the (Plautian) *matrona*, a *xantippe* even. Though Perc's greatest desire is "to sleep" (literally), he is forced to rush from the dubbing studio to the radio studio and later on to the theatre. He is hard-pressed for money; the extra income he derives from these activities is necessary to cover the cost of his house-building project. In a sense, Perc is a craftsman too; he is obliged by circumstances to take on such unartistic jobs; and he is tired and stressed when he assumes the role of Hamlet in the evening. His family name, Perc, means 'minute' (as: unit of time), a telling reference to his disagreeable, yet unavoidable, preoccupation with the materialistic and the mundane, including the purchase of sand and cement for the foundations of his house.

During the performance, just at the point he is supposed to start the recitation of the great soliloquy (leaning against the rail of the nearest box which is located adjacent to the stage), he begins to improvise instead, translating into the

¹⁷⁰ Tóth-Máthé himself worked as an actor for years in Debrecen.

paradigm of the soliloquy his own everyday and petty problems and concerns:

Építkezni, vagy nem építkezni... ez aggaszt mostanában! Akkor teszem-e okosan, ha tűröm Rózsi flancolásait, vagy ha véget vetek az egésznek és elválok?... És egy válás által megoldom minden gondomat, elsősorban ezt a vacak víkendházügyet.... [...] Fogalmam sincs, kit kéne felcsörgetni ebben az ügyben [...], de egyáltalán érdemes-e? Mit számít néhány cső vagy néhány tégl, ha belegondolok, hogy maholnap ötvenéves vagyok, és rövidesen már csak a homokra lesz szükségem. Vagy néhány kanál cementre, amivel befalazzák az urnámat, hogy aztán meglegyen a vityillóm az örökkévalóságra... De addig... addig még tűrni kell... addig ki kell menni a telekre, és ha belegebedek is, de meg kell csináltatni azt a házat... A ház! Az autó! A rang! Ez az, ami belőlünk mind gyávát csinál, és ahelyett, hogy beérnénk egy csőszkunyhóval, friss szénaalmon heverészve, hajtjuk magunkat a kifulladásig... Hajtjuk! Hajtjuk! És közben észre sem vesszük, hogy a mészben feloldjuk önmagunkat is, akik voltunk, vagy akik lehetünk volna...

[To have a house built, or not to have a house built... this is what troubles me these days!¹⁷¹ Am I acting prudently if I allow Rózsi to overspend the budget, or if I put an end to it all and get a divorce?... And with a divorce solve all my worries, especially this wretched business about a holiday house.... I've no idea who to ring up about it – but is it worth bothering about at all? Are a few pipes and bricks of any consequence when I face up to the fact that I'll soon be fifty and soon a bit of sand will be all I need? Or a few trowels of cement to fix my urn in the wall and provide me with an eternal cottage... Until then...until then one has to endure... until then one has to go out to the site; even if I kick the bucket, the house still needs to be finished... The house! The car! Status! This is what makes cowards of us all and instead of reclining happily on fresh hay in a hut, we drive ourselves on until we are out of breath.¹⁷² And we don't even notice that in the lime we are dissolving ourselves – who we have been or who we could have been.] (pp. 32-33)

The scene culminates when Ophelia finds a dozing Hamlet onstage as she enters after the great soliloquy. Awoken by his colleague, Perc is still unwilling to step back inside his role. “Have you any idea what it is like when you start to build a house?” (“Van fogalmad mit jelent belekezdeni egy építkezésbe?!”, p. 34), he addresses the actress playing Ophelia. This amusing yet poignant scene evokes the memory of Kenneth Branagh's amateur actors in *In the Bleak Midwinter* (1995, as *A Midwinter's Tale* in the U.S.). In this film a company of not only unprofessional actors but also, in some way, deeply tragic individuals, struggle to stage *Hamlet* in

¹⁷¹ In a more domesticating translation: ‘What a lot of worry!’.

¹⁷² “Hajtjuk!” [We are driving!] is repeated twice with exclamation marks both times. A freer translation would be ‘Till out of breath! Out of breath!’.

a deserted church in the countryside. Their *Hamlet* is indeed something rather different to the codified Shakespearean productions; these inexperienced ‘actors’ are bound to personalise the ‘source’, translating their own emotions into it.¹⁷³

The conceit of building a house is one familiar both in socialist and post-socialist Hungary. However, in socialist Hungary one had to struggle with a shortage of essentials and often use the help of acquaintances or relatives to acquire items that were easily obtainable in capitalist economies. The question “who to ring up” in the reworked soliloquy can be read in this context. Thus, it comes as little surprise when a member of the audience cries out and offers to help with the pipes as he knows somebody who works at the factory where they are made; and he encourages his ‘comrades’, the rest of the audience, to help the actor out with the remaining items. And so they do, offering, one after another, a hand with the bricks, cement, sand, and so on. A wry criticism of socialist communal practices is apparent here. It is the actor and not Hamlet who is supported by the audience, since the latter understand (though the French visitor does not) that Perc has stepped out of his role. The previously asked question “whose life is it anyway” (Clark 1978) may be posed again. What technically is an unwelcome and shameful *intermezzo* for the theatre (the manager is shivering with fright next to the French guest) is seen by the French director as a daring and innovative interaction with the audience. Even though he does not comprehend the Hungarian language, he is convinced by the complex and communicative theatrical language he sees. While the manager fears scandal, the guest indulges himself in the pleasure of the moment. As he exclaims, he has never heard the “To be, or not to be...” soliloquy delivered in such a suggestive way. After a while, having sorted out the actor’s problems, someone claims Hamlet – the ‘real’ one –

¹⁷³ “[T]he players of *A Midwinter’s Tale* amazingly overcome their eccentricities, insecurities and petty rivalries to present an inspired *Hamlet* full of legitimate pity and fear” (Bucker 1997, p. 291).

back, and the performance continues where it left off: with the ‘proper’ great soliloquy (most certainly in Arany’s ‘golden’ version).

It could be argued that Adorján Perc’s distortion of the great soliloquy, replacing the well-known rhetorical framework of the speech with topical and unexpected content, represents a trivial politicisation of the text. However, the reworked soliloquy not only constitutes a highly personalised statement of socialist ‘reality’ but it is also an interactive text in constant negotiation with the public. It is not a soliloquy any more; it is a dialogue between actors and audience, involving a conversation between individual spectators, too. The term *spoof* would be partially applicable to a rewrite of this kind, bearing in mind that the purpose is marginally parodistic, and not at all satirical. As with many of the great moments in Shakespeare, melancholy informs the atmosphere of this predominantly light-hearted work, too. If Tóth-Máthé’s short story trivialises *Hamlet* by reimagining it as community theatre, it also brings the character and his overdebated dilemma close to the everyday life of the actors and the audience, showing both (and the readers of the short story too) what may be behind the scenes and the masks.

Sobor’s 2003 short story “Fortinbras” starts by narrating the end of a *Hamlet* performance. In accordance with the ‘original’, Fortinbras and Horatio are the two major characters who stay alive at the end of the play. On this particular night, the respective actors feel so enraptured by the experience – arguably going through a catharsis themselves – that they remain onstage not only for a few moments following the fall of the curtain and the applause but long after the rest of the cast leave the building. They keep conversing, in fact, continuing the performance until the stagehand – eager to lock up and leave – sends them home. The opening of the story succeeds in capturing the reader’s attention because it is

not clear who speaks and what the narrative situation is. It is only in the second paragraph that the receiver understands: the narrative framework is that of a performance, more precisely, its aftermath.

The Fortinbras actor mentions the perturbing aspects of life that Hamlet talks of in the great soliloquy as problems awaiting him, problems he cannot escape. He envies the deceased Hamlet for the silence he must be enjoying.¹⁷⁴ He himself has been surrounded by noise since he became a ruler. He ought to start work with no delay, which involves reorganising the state, dealing with legislation, bureaucracy, and nepotism (Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's relatives are claiming high positions in turn for their bereavement). Horatio does not wish to stay, he asks for the new king's permission to return to Wittenberg. This recalls Laertes's request to Claudius to go to Paris, and Hamlet's plea to return to Wittenberg (Act I Scene Two). Fortinbras also gives the 'prophecy' that Hamlet will later be turned into a cultural icon and a paragon:

A krónikák? Nos, a krónikák majd róla szólnak. Könyvtárnyi könyv születik minden időben esetéről: eleganciájáról, magányosságáról, tragédiájáról. Ezrek és ezrek érzik majd testvérüknek; ideál lesz, rokon, ifjúkori eszmény, amelyet a halálig lehet hordozni. De félek: ürügy is lesz a meneküléshez. Igazolás a tett előli kitérőkhöz, keserű citátum, elemzendő látlelet, sápadt kórkép azoknak, akik az ő nagy magányának falaiból, fájdalma bástyáinak törmelékéből apró kis magányfalakat építgetnek maguk köré.

[The chronicles? Well, the chronicles will be about him.¹⁷⁵ There will be libraries of books written at all times about his case: about his elegance, his solitude, his tragedy. Thousands and thousands will feel he is their brother. He will be an ideal, a relation, a model in one's youth that one may carry for a lifetime. Yet I fear he will also be a pretext for escape, a justification for dodging action, a bitter citation, a symptom to be diagnosed, a pale report to those who build little solitude-walls around themselves from the walls of his great solitude and the splinters of the bastions of his pain.] (Sobor 2003)

Understandably, the actor, who lives in our day, is aware of the

¹⁷⁴ For translations of the sentence in question see Appendix One item 30.

¹⁷⁵ That is to say: the chronicles will be about Hamlet as opposed to Fortinbras, who is left with the job of completing what Hamlet found too difficult.

appropriation of Hamlet's character, which enables him to give this 'retrospective prognostication': it is a retrospective evaluation on the actor's behalf, and an act of foreboding from the character's perspective. In any case, it may be perceived as "writing beyond the ending" (DuPlessis 1985). Again, the question "whose life is it, anyway" is valid. As opposed to Perc's intervention, here it is open to interpretation whether it is the actor or the character who speaks: whether the actors performing Fortinbras and Horatio give their very own reading of the dramatic situation and its consequences or they improvise in order to continue, further write their characters in the spirit of the playtext in Arany's translation.

The 1888 Naturalist narrative "Papa Hamlet" by Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf is an earlier example of a theatre-related *Hamlet* narrative (cf. Cohn 1976, pp. 150-156). Importantly, it was Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet* that "Papa Hamlet" ironically juxtaposes with the grim, impecunious life of the provincial actors Niels and Amalia Thienweibel (the Hamlet and Ophelia characters of the story). In a like vein, the secondary school teacher Sobor's prose piece also reworks numerous quotations from Arany. The motive here is not so much irony but carrying out a close reading of the sentences, savouring the phrases, and putting some of them into a new context: that of Fortinbras's new reign.

Again, as in the previously discussed short story, Sobor's writing may be seen as putting forward a very sophisticated and progressive view of the role of the actor: it is a task of interpreting, reworking, in a sense, translating the playtext rather than mechanically delivering them following directorial instructions. Perc does this through personalising one of the important speeches, while the unnamed actors – continuously mentioned as Horatio and Fortinbras by the third person narrator – in Sobor's story interpret the characters they have been playing (or living?) in conjunction with understanding Hamlet's character and heritage.

Chapter Three: Hamlet in Hungarian Poetry

We can differentiate between two main tendencies in the Hungarian poetry influenced by *Hamlet*, which are often intertwined within the same poem: a more national-patriotic one, and one that treats *Hamlet* as a foundational text of poetry, as a reflection on the state of the art. The latter mode is thus more concerned with the metatextual aspect of poetry. In both modes *Hamlet* acts as source of inspiration or is even turned into a suitable vehicle for the poet's 'agenda'. Yet, the former mode is likely to topicalise the 'Hamlet' story, while the latter is preoccupied with Hamlet as a prototype of the poet. Indeed, his great soliloquy has been associated with the genre of the so-called *self-addressing poem* (önmegszólító verstípus), theorised by the Hungarian critic Béla Németh G. In an unpublished lecture András Kiséry (1999) sees the great soliloquy as a possible influential antecedent for this type of poem. The connection is mentioned in a cursory remark in Kiséry's paper, and it is worth further unfolding in the context of this chapter.

Németh G. introduces the concept of the self-addressing poem in his 1966 article entitled "Az önmegszólító verstípusról" [On the Self-addressing Poem], placing it in a psychological, sociological, linguistic and philosophical context.¹⁷⁶ He views its emergence as related to 'roles' played by individuals in society ('roles' developed throughout history, such as family roles, work-related roles, emotional attachments). Although the poems belonging to this category vary in their characteristics depending on their respective time of conception, essentially, they all

¹⁷⁶ Apart from using Heidegger's work, Németh G. also employs the philosophy, or rather, social theory of Marxism. Marx pointed out that role as a category in society is a historical development. Much of Németh G.'s early work is very indebted to Marxism. It is open to debate whether he was a genuine devotee of Marxism or only adopted it in his writing in order to be published.

have a speaker who challenges him/herself, argues with him/herself, weighs up different possibilities against one another, and usually reaches a point of self-reconciliation or a new inner strength. Interestingly, Németh G. does not envisage the potential impact of the theatrical soliloquy on this type of poem. Nevertheless, he mentions dramatic tone, pathos and sententiousness as standard characteristics of the self-addressing poem (1997, pp. 202-203). In a different context, Wolfgang Clemen notes that some instances of self-confrontation in *Hamlet* result in self-dramatisation (1987, p. 121). He emphasises the theatrical potential of this; yet, the poetic potential latent in this aspect appears very important, too. Of course, not all *Hamlet*-inspired Hungarian poems are reworkings of the great soliloquy, neither are all self-addressing poems, yet there are examples of one or both elements.

The crucial question of Hamlet's great soliloquy provides the opening phrase of Mihály Csokonai Vitéz's "Halotti versek" [~Funereal Verses/Verses on Mortality], a long philosophical poem commissioned for the funeral of Mrs Lajos Rhédei in 1804.¹⁷⁷ Csokonai (1773-1805) was one of the most versatile poets of the Hungarian Enlightenment and sentimentalism. This work approximates to the genre of the self-addressing poem as it tackles existential questions, under the influence of Plato, Cicero, Pope, Rousseau, Voltaire, Kotzebue and Moses Mendelssohn (cf. Szilágyi in Csokonai 2002, p. 989):

Lenni? vagy nem lenni? – kérdések kérdése!
Mellynek, nehéz, kétes, szép, a' megfejtése.

[To be? or not to be? – the question of questions!
The answer to which is difficult, dubious, beautiful.]

The Hamletian influence must have come via Kazinczy's adaptation, although

¹⁷⁷ Lóránt Czigány mentions it under the approximate title "Funeral Songs" (1984, p. 99).

Kazinczy himself did not appreciate either the poem or its original ‘performance’ by the author as part of the funeral service inside the church in the Transylvanian Nagyvárad. The addressees of the poem include the soul, God, existence and non-existence, animals, Rousseau (indirectly), the audience of the poem at the funeral, and the deceased herself. Especially where the speaker addresses the soul, the text displays the characteristics of the self-addressing poem as the apostrophe appears to refer to the speaker’s own soul, yet also to everyman’s soul:

[...] belém szállott Lélek! [...]
Szállj magadba, nézd-meg ön természetet,
Meríts erőt abból, ‘s fejtsd meg lételedet.

[Soul that has flown into me!
Look into yourself, look at your own nature,
Gather strength from it, and discover your existence.]

It might be an exaggeration to claim that Petőfi’s poem “Világosságot” [Light!] (1847) was written in response to this, but there certainly is an intertextual altercation between the two poems. Petőfi’s text, contemplating the purpose of life, places the question “lenni vagy nem lenni” [to be or not to be] in the middle of the poem. As Elemér Császár stresses, it equals Shakespeare’s text (“méltó párja a Shakespeare-ének”, 1917, p. 234). Petőfi’s work openly refers to its ‘Shakespearean’ source through the quotation of this famous phrase. There is an overt reference here to Csokonai’s poem too; in a gesture of corrective rewriting Petőfi’s poem emphasises that the question of questions (“kérdések kérdése” in Csokonai) is not ‘to be or not to be’ for the speaker of the poem. The more urgent issue of social injustice makes the speaker contemplate whether self-sacrifice for the ‘world’ (világ) achieves anything: “Használ-e a világnak, aki érte / Fömláldozá magát?” [Does s/he help the world who sacrifices oneself for it?]. The existential question known from the great soliloquy

and Csokonai's poem is more pragmatic here. It is concerned with the present and the task of the individual rather than the future:

Nem kérdem én, hogy mi leszek?
Csak azt mondd meg, hogy mi vagyok?
S miért vagyok? ...
Magáért születik az ember,
Mert már magában egy világ?
Vagy csak egy gyűrűje
Az óriási láncnak,
Melynek neve emberiség?

[I'm not asking what I will be.
Just tell me what I am.
And why I am.
Is one born for him/herself
As one is a world in him/herself?
Or is one only an element
Of the huge chain called humanity?]

While pondering on what happiness is the poem engages in a discussion of epicurean solitude versus engagement in the community. From another perspective, these two poems also highlight the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet* in Hungarian.

II

Let us look at a few poems in which the poet has a mission – with regard to the nation or otherwise –, and how this mandate enjoys a common inscription with *Hamlet*. Firstly, let us focus on two poems in which at least two important sites of memory are revisited at the same time: *Hamlet* and Petőfi.

Arany's romantic poem "A honvéd özvegye" [The Soldier's Widow; more literally: 'The Widow of the Defender of the Homeland'] (1850) features a ghostly appearance, whereby the titular widow appears as a Gertrude character, remarrying

not long after her late husband's heroic death on the battlefield.¹⁷⁸ This is a case of motif-based intertextuality with Shakespeare but also with at least two poems by Arany's close friend, 'the' national poet of Hungary: Petőfi. These poems are "Egy gondolat bánt engemet" ("I'm Troubled by One Thought") (1846) and "Szeptember végén" ("At the End of September") (1847).¹⁷⁹ "Egy gondolat bánt engemet" can also be read – and this is what most readers did at the time – in the context of Petőfi's biography; more precisely: in the context of what happened to his wife and son after he vanished (most probably passed away in the battle at the Transylvanian Segesvár). Júlia Szendrey, in fact, married the university tutor Árpád Horváth in 1850, just a year after Petőfi's disappearance.

The motif of the widow of an honourable person remarrying at a "wicked speed" marks a close connection with *Hamlet*. The element that this widow has a son from her first marriage is a common point with both Shakespeare's play and Petőfi's life, whose only son, Zoltán, had a premature death at the age of twenty-two (as this poem might 'prophesy'):

Légy anyja és nem mostohája,
Nehogy eljöjjenek egy napon,
És elvezessem kézen fogva
Őt is oda, hol én lakom! ...¹⁸⁰

[Be his mother and not his stepmother,
Lest I turn up one day
And lead him by the hand
Where I live too!] (Arany 1962, p. 136)

¹⁷⁸ The term *honvéd* 'literally' means 'a defender of the homeland'; for a definition see Czigány 1984, p. 536.

¹⁷⁹ The latter will be quoted in a translation by Adam Makkai and Valerie Becker Makkai (Makkai 2000, pp. 382-383).

¹⁸⁰ The whole of this extract is in internal quotation marks in the poem. The speaker of the poem quotes the ghost of the soldier (whom most criticism 'identifies' with Petőfi) as s/he recounts and comments on the apparition. Hereby Arany differentiates this part from the rest of the speaker's narration.

In contrast with *Hamlet*, the ghost here does not admonition the son but the widow, because he is hurt and embittered as she entered into a new conjugal commitment so early. In fact, the ghost in *Hamlet* specifically warns the protagonist against torturing his mother. This appears to be a chief purpose of his apparition in the closet scene. While all of old Hamlet's *angst* is directed against his own murderer, who is, at the same time, a disloyal brother and his widow's new husband, the ghost in Arany's poem only and exclusively criticises the widow, the "szép özvegy" [beautiful widow], who does not prove to have deserved the soldier's devotion. It is thus logical that the widow in this poem sees the ghost clearly, while in *Hamlet* the queen thinks Hamlet is hallucinating. Another different element is that here the third party – the new husband – was not in any way involved in the soldier's death, neither did he and the widow have a relationship before the soldier's death, as some would argue Claudius and Gertrude may have had (though this is not particularly supported by the extant Shakespearean sources). As Petőfi's poem "Egy gondolat bánt engemet" expresses the speaker's desire not to die in a bed, surrounded by pillows but in a battlefield, in Arany's poem the dying soldier, after being shot¹⁸¹, meditates the same thought. This invokes Petőfi's poem almost word by word.

The soldier in Arany's poem also comes back to confirm that he is dead, since there were no witnesses to his fall. (This is in accordance with rumours about Petőfi's possible survival and wandering under a pseudonym – this is the time of various fake Petőfis.) On the other hand, the death old Hamlet recounts is not sacrificial but murderous; it serves Claudius's agenda as opposed to a common cause.

¹⁸¹ With a very sentimentalist-romanticist, almost sensationalist device: the poem's soldier was shot twice, once on his right side and once on the left.

It is during the wedding party that the soldier, or rather his ghost, appears. The motif of the wedding itself recalls *Hamlet*, in particular the reference to the “funeral bak’d meats” that “coldly furnish[ed] forth the marriage tables” (I/2; 180-181); and the merrymaking *Hamlet* refers to when talking to the night wardens (I/4; 8-12).¹⁸² Claudius himself says earlier that he intends to drink in Hamlet’s honour when Hamlet agrees to stay in Denmark (I/2; 125-128). Memory is very important in this poem on different levels: the ghost thinks that forgetting (“feledség”) happens far too early to his memory, and the poem also testifies Arany’s impregnated, creative memory of Petőfi’s poems and of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* that he will translate more than a decade later. The intertextual link with *Hamlet* is made absolutely overt in the epigraph to the poem, which is a quotation from Hamlet’s derision of his mother’s action from his first soliloquy (I/2; 146-151). Arany quotes Hamlet’s words in his own translation. It is unclear whether Arany translated only this particular bit for the sake of providing a suitable epitaph for the poem or whether he was already pondering on the possibility of a *Hamlet* translation, and making drafts for it. The epitaph is not in inverted commas, but after an ellipsis Arany indicates that it is from *Hamlet* or from Hamlet, the character (this is unclear as Shakespeare’s name does not appear):

... Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!
Csak egy rövid hó : még a gyász cipő sem
Szakadt el, melyben könnyé olvadt
Niobeként kísérte ki szegény
Atyám holttestét : s ím ő, épen ő
Férjhez megyen ...

¹⁸² Quite a few *Hamlet* films indulge in the presentation of this merrymaking, whether it is a reference to the wedding or only the illustration of the wealthy and worldly life Gertrude and Claudius share (for example, the film directed by Tony Harrison has a scene in which the ambassadors and Polonius are making a report, with Judy Parfitt’s Gertrude and Anthony Hopkins’s Claudius lying in a bed; around the bed are dogs, and fruit and other food is served to them in great abundance; there are also lascivious undertones). The Debrecen *Hamlet* from 1999 also presents a funeral followed by a wedding and the coronation of the new king – all acted out without words.

[...Frailty, your name is woman!
Only a short month: the mourning shoes – in which she accompanied
my poor father’s corpse like a Niobe melted into tears –
haven’t even been worn out.
And behold: she, exactly she, is getting married.] (1962, p. 130)

And from Arany’s translation published in 1867:

Gyarlóság, asszony a neved! – Csak egy
Rövid hó: még cipője sem szakadt el,
Melyben atyám testét kísérte ki,
Niobe módra könnyé válva: s ím
(Ó, Isten! Egy barom, egy oktalan
Tovább gyászolna) ím, ő, éppen ő,
Atyám öccsével egybekél [...]

[Frailty, your name is woman!
Only a short month: her shoes – in which she accompanied,
turning into tears like Niobe, my father’s body – haven’t even been
worn out.
And behold (Oh God! A beast, a stupid person
Would mourn longer), and behold, she, exactly she
Marries my father’s younger brother...] (p. 101)

There are differences, firstly the passage is abridged for the epigraph so that it becomes more focused, more pointed, and the clause containing a reference to Niobe is reformulated in the translation of the whole play. In the motto the emphasis is on the fact that the widow got remarried (it is omitted to whom she got remarried. This gives the quotation a wider appeal and applicability).

Petőfi’s speaker in “Szeptember végén” wonders if his wife will throw away his name, a name which was so precious to her once (and Arany later puts this as a complaint into the soldier’s mouth). Arany turns this around, making Petőfi’s words (written during his honeymoon, yet strongly preoccupied with the idea of dying a heroic death for the liberty of his nation) come true and sound like a prophecy. In the Makkais’ translation: “I shall rise from the darkness” (Makkai 2000, p. 383).

Éva Finta's 2000 poem "Hamlet királyfi Barguzinban" [Prince Hamlet in Barguzin]¹⁸³ transmits the worries of a Hungarian poet living in the Ukraine (as a member of the Hungarian minority group there) regarding the role of the poet as a chronicler of her times in the vein of Hamlet styling the actor to be the "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time" (II/2; 520). Within Hungarian culture there is a great deal of importance attached to the role of the *poeta vates*, the seer-poet or prophet-poet, who, as a leader of the nation, provides ideological and spiritual guidance at difficult times. This role was predominant in the romantic period, and Petőfi envisaged himself in the *vates* role (cf. his poem "A XIX. század költői" [The Poets of the 19th Century], for example). Finta's poem is deeply intertextual as it is reminiscent of *Hamlet*, Petőfi and István Kormos's well-known poem about Yorick. It abounds in further allusions to, among others, the modernist poet and translator Babits and the myth of Attila the Hun (leader of the 'brother nation' of Hungarians that preceded the Magyars in the Carpathian Basin).

It is not accidental that the universal, yet naturalised national poet, Shakespeare, and the epitomous Hungarian national poet, Petőfi, are invoked side by side in this poem. As has been explained in Part One Chapter One, the Hungarian Shakespeare was constructed by means of the translations by leading Hungarian poets, mainly the Romantic triumvirate of Arany, Petőfi and Vörösmarty. This semi-identification of these writers with the Hungarian Shakespeare has special relevance here.

"Petőfi's presence still haunts the national consciousness of Hungarians" (Makkai 2000, p. 364). As the above discussed poem by Arany also testifies, Petőfi's

¹⁸³ The title has the term *királyfi* [prince] attached to Hamlet, which has become widespread after Arany.

life and disappearance is an important site of memory in Hungarian cultural history. This is due to the fact that his corpse was not found after the battle of Segesvár after which he disappeared. In order to clarify the importance of Petőfi ‘haunting’ this poem, a terse summary of a topical issue underlying Finta’s poem seems inevitable. According to a nineteenth-century myth, Petőfi did not die a heroic death in the Hungarian War of Independence but fled to Russia and died there decades later.¹⁸⁴ The anxiety caused by the loss of Petőfi as a national hero – alongside the defeat of the War of Independence – may account, at least partially, for the hope latent in this myth that he was still alive. In 1985 the Hungarian Ferenc Morvai, initially together with András Balajthy, acting upon this myth, decided to investigate whether a suspicious skeleton found in Siberia, at Barguzin was Petőfi’s (cf. Makkai 2000, p. 364). Morvai himself part-financed the endeavour, yet nothing convincing was found. Nevertheless, public sentiment was aroused, different opinions have been voiced with respect to the possibility of the long-standing myth of the quintessential Magyar poet dying in a battle in 1849 at Segesvár being proved untrue.

This constitutes a major subtext of the poem, underlining that finding Petőfi’s tomb would imply coming to terms with part of the nation’s past. “Valahol lenni kell a sírnak” [The tomb has to be somewhere], the speaker asserts, but then the following line emphasises that one may not find the grave: “Attila koporsója sincsen” [Attila’s grave hasn’t been found either]. The speaker of the poem surmises that “Ezek a sírok vándorolnak” [These graves are wandering around], and one may find their spirit(s) wherever one digs. Yet, it might also suggest that it is not essential to find the graves

¹⁸⁴ One of the major Hungarian literary cults is centred around Petőfi. *Az irodalmi kultusz kutatás könyve* [~Studying Literary Cults] (2003) edited by József Takáts contains essays on the cult of Petőfi, including relics and post-1849 myths (regarding the so-called *bujdosó* – wandering – Petőfi).

of the great ones; it might be better sometimes not to find one and let the mythical uncertainty live on. The phrase ‘kis magyar tetemrehívás’ [little Hungarian ordeal by blood] refers to the title and subject matter of János Arany’s 1877 ballad entitled “Tetemre hívás” (in English translation: “Bier-right or Ordeal by Blood”¹⁸⁵). In this poem a folk belief is revitalised, according to which the wound of the murdered person reacts by bleeding on the appearance of the killer. Finta’s poem recontextualises this literary reference to comment on the turmoil caused by the abovementioned recent, slightly sensationalist, event connected to Petőfi.

In the following metaphorical sentence, the speaker of the poem admits, if somewhat bitterly, that the late Petőfi could have stayed in Siberia: “Az ember olykor el is törhet” [Humans can even break sometimes]. The line suggests that if Petőfi did, in fact, flee towards Russia, this compromise must have been due to a defect in his personality, a case of giving up his main objectives and mission. This is suggested with an understanding, forgiving overtone. The persona of the poem calls Petőfi a ‘poet prince’ and visualises him on soft and warm female laps. This may conjure the image of another ‘poet prince’, Hamlet, in the mousetrap scene, where he asks Ophelia if he could lie in her lap (III/2; 110-119). The culturally dominant image of the Hungarian national poet is shifted into a fragile icon – here literally a sacred image (an indispensable cultic object in Orthodox religion). Sándor Petőfi, or in his new culture, Alekszander (the transliteration of the Russian version of the ‘same’ first name), “drifted into another fate” (‘egy másik sorsba átsodorva’) but is still pictured in this poem as a figure important enough to be commemorated in an icon. Thus, the

¹⁸⁵ This is the title of the translation by Peter Zollman, in Makkai 2000, pp. 330-332. The literary historian Lóránt Czigány discusses the poem under the approximate title “Confrontation with the Corpse” (1984, p. 204).

poem refers to the very human side of the mythical Petőfi beside the mythicised, idolatrous aspect.¹⁸⁶

The snow that blocks the roads is also allusive to Mihály Vörösmarty's 1850-51 poem "Előszó" [Prologue], where the motif of snow and winter connotes the muted and crippled situation of the Hungarian intellectual under the Austrian autocracy. This was not much after Petőfi's heroic death or disappearance. Vörösmarty's line "Most tél van és csend és hó és halál" ("It's winter now and death and snow and stillness")¹⁸⁷ [Now it is winter and silence and snow and death] (Pándi 1965, p. 476) is highly metaphorical and, indeed, a reflection on the times.

It is in this dense intertextual context that the poem questions the very essence and contemporary relevance of being a poet: "«Mit ér az ember», hogyha költő? – / Kilóg a sírból koponyája ["What is a person worth" if s/he's a poet? – / His/Her skull lolls out of the grave/tomb]. This is in an intertextual relationship with the gravediggers' scene, and specifically, with Yorick. The allusion points to the transience of humans, including poets. Kormos's poem, and its identification of the poet-speaker with Yorick, is also an important intertext. The speaker of Kormos's poem identifies himself as Yorick, but also mentions that he inherited the name Kormos from his mother, was given the first name István, and was also known under various nicknames (1984, pp. 88-89). It is noteworthy that the witty yet vulnerable figure of the jester becomes an allegory of 'the' Hungarian poet. This intertextual game with roles and models continues in Finta's poem. The approximate translation can hardly keep up with the multidimensional references in the text. "Mit ér az

¹⁸⁶ Parenthetically, the phrase 'kis magyar tetemrehívás' [little Hungarian ordeal by blood] coterminously recalls the title of Péter Esterházy's accomplished prose work written during the socialist era in Hungary, *Kis magyar pornográfia* (A Little Hungarian Pornography). The work was translated by Judith Sollosy under this – very 'faithful' – title.

¹⁸⁷ This is a quotation from Peter Zollman's translation in Makkai 2000 (p. 268).

ember” is already a quotation (the author herself recognises this by the use of inverted commas), a Hungarian topos that has had many apparitions in Hungarian literature through Zrínyi via Ady. The original question is “Mit ér az ember, ha magyar?” [What is one worth if s/he’s a Hungarian?]. The fact that the poet speaks as a member of a minority group of Hungarians who strive to maintain their native culture within the body of a different people puts an emphasis on Finta’s rhetorical question. As noted before, there is a traditional sense of the Hungarian poet as someone with a mandate, who is supposed to serve his/her (typically his) people, to “set right” whatever is “out of joint” – someone with a grave mission, very much like Hamlet. In this poem, however, the persona senses no need to shoulder the formidable task of supporting and giving directions to the community, and this troubles the speaker, who finds her/himself in a vacuum, left alone, without a clear-cut vocation:

És éjjel van. Mindenki alszik.
Pegazusom se kérne enni.
Seni se bánja, ha nem írok.
Senki se bánja, hogyha elhal
gondolat, tálentum, törekvés –
az idő önmagát felejt.

[And now it’s night-time. All are asleep.
My Pegasus won’t want feeding.
No one minds if I don’t write.
No one minds if thought, talent
and aspiration die out –
time forgets itself.]

This poem highlights the struggle of a rather traditional poet figure with a strong sense of mission, who finds that there is no need to perform this *poeta vates* role amid the contemporary turmoil.

In a metatextual gesture the epilogue to the poem admits that there has been a game with cultural references in the poem. Yorick is named here, with the

Shakespearean epithet (V/1; 178) famous from Arany's translation and Kormos's poem: *szegény* [poor, miserable]. The mention of Yorick tolerating the speaker's intertextual gaming might suggest that Yorick is alive, through the memory of his puns, and through the mark he left on language. This might also indicate the eternal life of poets in general (which is another topos, one also 'recycled' by Shakespeare in his sonnets). Interestingly, both Hamlet and Yorick are epitomes of the poet in this work:

Eljátszottam e téli éjen
Elárult, rossz szavak hadával
És szent maradt a szent a képen.
Szegény Yorick eltűri vétkem.

[I've been playing this winter night
With a swarm of betrayed, bad words
And the saint in the picture remained a saint.
Poor Yorick will tolerate my sin.]

The strong cultural status of 'the saint' (Petőfi) remained intact, no matter what theoretical possibilities the poem has negotiated. The outcome of this meditation links us back to the sacred position of Shakespeare and *Hamlet* (and Hamlet), which are intertwined here with the sacredness of the Hungarian canonical poet again – yet this time within creative writing and not in translation proper or its criticism.

The poem thus revivifies themes and motifs from *Hamlet* – the ghost, Yorick, the graveyard – by juxtaposition to numerous other cultural references and immersion in the Petőfi myth. This is another text where *Hamlet* is inscribed with cultural memory, the nation's past and the typical Hungarian figure of the *poeta vates* (of which Petőfi is a prototype). It is striking that even though the main body of the poem reflects on Petőfi as a *poeta vates* figure, the title substitutes Hamlet for the Barguzin skeleton. The Hungarian cultural role of the 'poet with a mission' is inextricably linked to the figure of Hamlet (and *Hamlet* as a textual entity, as a constantly revived

intertext: a text always in between). The poem seems to hesitate between the two attitudes outlined at the beginning of this chapter: on one hand, it certainly links *Hamlet* to the story of the Hungarian nation (and some of its great personages), on the other, it is also concerned with the state of the art of poetry and the vacuum in which the contemporary poet feels situated with regard to her or his ‘mission’.

“Levél Hamlethez” [A Letter to Hamlet] (2001) by the Transylvanian theatre director and poet Gábor Tompa (born 1957) revisits the motif of Hamlet’s pretended madness. The poem, as the title suggests, addresses Hamlet: “Királyfi! Dánom! Hamlet! Hercegem!” [Prince! My Dane! Hamlet! My prince!]. Given the historical circumstances, the speaker finds it necessary to put on a clown’s costume. Again, this is a covert allusion to Yorick (not only in Shakespeare’s and Arany’s but also in Kormos’s work). The speaker mentions the imminent end of an era: “utolsó futam/ készülődik már évek óta itt” [the final race has been in preparation here for years]. The speaker finds fighting for power futile: “A trón üres [...] Bolond, ki arra tör” [The throne is empty. S/he that attempts to take it is a fool].

“Hamlet elkallódott monológja” (“Hamlet’s Lost Monologue”) by László Kálnoky (1912-1985) appears to be a poem in between the two main attitudes outlined above. Its analytic, self-assessive speaker appears to have had a mandate; yet, this is more to do with his sense of vocation to save the innocent. It is, thus, a universal vocation rather than one resorting to the speaker’s nation. Hamlet is juxtaposed here with Prometheus, another famous saviour of humankind, who suffered undeservedly. The allusion is covert, through the mention of “pecked fragments of liver” (Makkai 1996, p. 745; “csőr-tépte májdarab”, 1992, p. 220). Again, there is a connection with the self-addressing poem.

Jenő Kiss's (1912-1996) poem entitled "A Hamlet-monológra" [After the Hamlet Soliloquy] (1949) is a thoroughly politicised appropriation. The five-stanza poem celebrates and promotes a predigested communist ideology, juxtaposing the action-mindedness of socialism with Hamlet's hitherto despised passivity: "mi lenni, tenni: élni akarunk!" [we want to be, to act: to live]. The allegedly 'international' ideology dominating the poem may account for the lack of a nationalist component within its overall ideological structure. The avoidance of the patriotic connection is all the more striking given that the author was a member of the Hungarian minority in Romania. The poem – being immersed in socialist ideology – rather naively promotes revolution, breaking with the past and looking towards the future. This specifically relates to historical injustices endured by the working class: "Igen, Hamlet, mi azt mondjuk: csak törd szét / a korbácsot, mi szenvedni tanít" [Yes, Hamlet, we say: just break the scourge that teaches you to suffer] (1988, p. 121). Even violence is acceptable if it leads to the demolishing of tyranny:

Nincs annyi seb, mi sok volna egy tisztább,
egy jobb: emberhez méltó életért.

[There cannot be too many wounds for a purer,
better life, deserved by humans.] (1988, p. 121)

As it might also be argued about Gáspár's play, Hamlet comes across in this poem as an anti-hero, an anti-model. He is called "a pale prince" ("sápadt királyfi"); his undecidedness and melancholy are ridiculed. "Bizony, mi, Hamlet, azt mondjuk; csak üss szét / a gazok közt, szabadság fegyvere!" [Yes, we say, Hamlet, disband the knaves, you, weapon of liberty!] (1988, p. 121). The persona speaks as a member of the socialist society and Hamlet is an addressee. *Szabadság fegyvere* [weapon of liberty] can be Hamlet's epithet or can be a totally independent apostrophe, that of an abstract notion. At the climax of the poem Hamlet is overtly and severely criticised:

“Hamlet, bús bölcs! Bölcs? Nem – csak tenni gyáva!” [Hamlet, sorrowful sage! Sage? No – only a coward to act!] This turns into a direct apostrophe of the figure of Hamlet:

Vond el szemedről révült ujjadat!
Mit itt látsz, már az ember új világa,
Mert cselekedni mertünk újakat.
Élnek már – íme – nemzetek a földön,
Szabad hittel maguknak építők –
S itt is, ott is leomlik egy-egy börtön –
A nép szavától égnek az idők.

[Take your entranced finger away from your eyes
What you see here is the new world of humankind
Because we dared to perform new deeds.
Lo! There are now nations in the world
Building for themselves with free faith
And here and there a prison collapses –
The times are being burnt by the voices of the people.] (1988, pp. 120-121)

The spirit (rather than ghost) that points out the direction for the community on behalf of whom the persona speaks is a revolutionary: Lenin. This comes across as sacrilegious to *Hamlet* as the word *Lenin* has the very same letters – in a different order – as *lenni* [to be], a key word of the great soliloquy. The poem ends with this impertinent rebuff. Small wonder the poem provided a quotation for a school-leavers’ *tableau* for the famous poet Domokos Szilágyi’s class in 1955, apart from having been anthologised in 1953 in a representative collection of Hungarian poetry written in Romania (cf. Kántor 1990, pp. 38 and 40). Interestingly and not untypically of the process of socialist indoctrination, the quotation for the *tableau* was tailored at the headteacher’s request, the addressing of the pale prince had to be deleted, and “kétségek mérlege” [the balance of doubts] was replaced by “kérdések mérlege” [the balance of questions].

III

The more pronouncedly metatextual aspect of *Hamlet*-inspired poetry also deserves attention. Dezső Tándori's (born 1938) collection of poetry *Töredék Hamletnek* [Fragment to Hamlet] (1968) was a major watershed in Hungarian poetry, and it marked, in the view of many critics, the beginning of Hungarian postmodern poetry. The title-giving poem raises the issue of plurality and the fragmentariness of contemporary life:

– ily egyetlenné el-nem-gondolás
tehet csak. Minden megközelítés már
önmagától tűnékeny: mérték,
melyet mindig saját
változása teremt meg; oly síp,
mely csak saját hangjára szól –

Ó, te állhatatlan odaadás,
te, kit már egy porszemnyi át-nem-szítált idő
megül halálosan –

[– only non-consideration can make one
so singular. Every approach
is already transitory by itself: a standard
that is always created by its own change; a whistle
that only plays its own tune –

O you fickle devotion,
you on whom even a grain of unsieved time
sits fatally –] (1968, p. 59)

At least two more poems in the volume bear marks of *Hamlet*. In “II. Töredék” [Second Fragment], the infinitive *kizuhanni* [zoom out of something rapidly] may allude to the great soliloquy, namely the departure into the unknown country of death. According to “III. Töredék” [Third Fragment], our only complete mask is the one after death.

Poems by Szilárd Borbély (born 1964) that are related to *Hamlet* also belong primarily to the metapoetical strand of ‘Hamletised’ Hungarian poetry. Interestingly, when Borbély published the two poems to be referred to here in the literary magazine *Alföld*, the titles indicated a certain *H*. Apart from this letter, which can be interpreted as Hamlet’s initial, motifs of the poems made an intertextual connection with *Hamlet* feasible, yet it was the inclusion of the rewritten versions of these poems into an edited volume that made these texts even more explicitly linked to *Hamlet*. (Most changes are to do with punctuation and breaking up the poems into stanzas; there are relatively few lexical alterations or omissions.) Even though the new titles do not allude to *H*, the title of the collection itself – *Berlin & Hamlet* – explicitly points to *Hamlet* as an intertext.

The new titles given by Borbély for the poems in the volume formulate an overt intertextual link with Tandori’s abovementioned collection, due to the word *töredék* [fragment]. “H., a kiszámíthatatlan” [H., the Unpredictable] was retitled as “[Töredék VIII.]” for the poetry collection (2003, p. 63). The earlier version will be quoted here. It needs emphasising, however, that the layout of the poem is slightly different in the volume: there is a full stop after *borotvás gyilkos* [killer with a razor], and a new stanza opens after *füledbe* [into your ear]. It seems that continuous rewriting and revision take place in some of the more creative *Hamlet*-related texts as well, not only in translations ‘proper’:

‘Nytott kés szeretnék
lenni, a kiszámíthatatlan.
Borotvás gyilkos, a hízeltő
nyelvű, aki füledbe mérget
csepegtet.’

[I would like to be an open knife,
the unpredictable.
A killer with a razor and with a flattering

tongue, who can drip poison
into your ear.] (Borbély 1999)

The poem reworks Claudius's tendency to flattery, which is so successful with Laertes in the play. Claudius's smooth, rhetorical style conceals the unpredictability of his action: the fact that he can drip poison into one's ears. The apparition of this intertext in Borbély's poem can be read as an allegory of poetry. The speaker of a poem – and the genre of poetry in general – should be like this: unpredictable, with a potential to surprise, to startle the reader. Thus, Borbély's poem can be seen as a metapoem, reflecting on the 'nature' of the art (cf. Holmes 1970 and Gentzler pp. 91 and 129). The motif of poisoning someone through the ear is a historical intertext as well in the context of medieval Hungary. Vazul, a potential heir to the throne of Hungary, was murdered by lead being trickled into his ear.

In Borbély's poem "H., a kísértő" [H., the Tempter] – or, under its new title, "[Töredék IX.]" [Fragment IX] – the idea of a ghost is reminiscent of *Hamlet*:

Ha szellemet láttam volna, talán
akkor sem lepődöm meg jobban.

[Had I seen a ghost probably
I wouldn't have been more surprised.] (2003, p. 70)

The night wardens also appear in the poem; they are, however, translated into security men of a large supermarket (where the speaker of the poem is wandering and meets someone unexpectedly – it is more surprising than if it were a ghost).

Ottó Orbán's (1936-2002) bipartite poem "Helsingör" is another case in point. It can also be read as two adjacent poems, linked together by the *Hamlet* intertext. In order to point out aspects of metatextuality an approximate translation of the whole poem seems essential:

Egy királyfi borotválkozik

Megeshet és gyakorta úgy esik,
Hogy kedvünk tűnő alkalmak barátja,
elkendőzi való ábrázatát,
s hol még előbb szándék és szorgalom
sürgették múlani a renyhe órát,
oly egy szegény ki volt, a képzelet
arany nyarat bő kézzel tékozol
és fürge percek harmatos csapásin
mohó kopóként űzve a csömört
felhőbe vonja jókedvünk delét.
Kevély örömnnek ez szoros verem
s szorongni százszorosan az, mivel
"szorost" gondolni könnyű, tűrni terhes,
ha enyhülést is kínál, hogy bajunk
köz-nehézség és így kiállható.
Csak lenne orrunk bűzüket szagolni,
ó hogy rühellenénk csapongani
e fenséges disznóólak körül!
Ó hogy magasra szökne csillagunk,
az oly való, mint hogy ha földre szédül,
hol rögök közt tenyész a szóvirág,
a kertész nyelv parázna veteménye,
a legbujább a gizgazok közül,
mely kékre bírva érintetlen eszmét
erőszakot tesz költészet nevén.
Elnézni azt, hogy rímel e rima,
Oly tett, mitől a tekintet pirul;
Tűrni a szégyent szótalán viszont,
istent kíván, nem embernek való.
Eként az ágasnyelvű színlelés
Élő hurokként percünk fojtogatva
rosszakra költ, elköltve azt, amit
fel kéne költeni, a szenvedélyt,
az unalom tojását költi ki;
a szó-bűvész pedig, bár célja fennkölt:
sugárral édesíteni a panaszt,
hamis kocsmárosként híg szóbeszéddel
vizezi szenvedésünk óborát.
E betegség méltóságunk csikarja,
Viseljünk bár a szánkon ragtapaszt,
A locska hév királyt is megszalaszt
De arcunk síma, el most reggelizni!

Átirat

“Nevezett úr rossz idegműködésének áldozata. Sajnálatos, de ez tény. Másképp kitűnne pólomeccseken mint fürgébb trónutódok, de így, mivel hasából egy kergült idegcsomó hibás parancsot továbbít szívéhez, fensége merő szédülés. Recsegő bútorokban szellemet gyanít. Ha egy vízcsap csöpög, az arca megfeszül, ‘királyi vér’ kiáltja, és ‘rútul kiontatol’, és eközben szemében oly káprázat lobog, hogy látni siralom. De fondor irigység táplálja gyászát. Anyját, e hervadásnak indult, élveteg királynét, úgy bámulja, mint sanda szerzetes a kurvát. Ez jóra nem vezet. Az államgépezet markáns egyéniségre vágyik, jó tv-arcra és helyes beszédre. Nevezett úr hóbortja ótvar nemzetünk ábrázatán. Ezért szemünkben ő megbízhatatlan, olyan kór, melyet honunk húsából kivágni hív a kötelesség. S hogy nem késtünk lehallgatni beszélgetéseit, ez szóljon hűségünk felől. Tanácsunk: autóbaleset, mely után pár napig klasszikus zenét sugároz a rádió. Nagy M-mel: Méltóságaitok híve. Pecsét, két másolat; Polonius.”

[A prince is shaving

It may and it often does happen
that our mood is a friend of passing chance,
it veils its real countenance,
and where lately will and diligence
were urging the lazy hour to pass,
such a pauper as imagination
wastes the golden summer with generous hands,
and on swift moments' dewy path
as a greedy hound chasing surfeit
draws our hilarity's noon into a cloud.
This is a narrow pit for haughty joy,
and to be anxious is a hundred times as narrow, for
narrow is easy to think of, to bear it is burdensome
even if it offers the ease that our trouble
is a shared one and, thus, bearable.
I wish we had a nose to smell their stink
oh how we would dread roving
about the majestic pigsties.
Oh, that our star would leap high
is as true as that it spins dizzily to earth
where the flowers of rhetoric grow amongst the clods
the most lecherous of weeds,
which violate the name of poetry
by cajoling the intact idea into pleasure.
Watching how this slut rhymes
is an act that makes the countenance blush.
To bear the shame without a word, however,
Calls for a god; it is not for a human.
Thus forked-tongued pretence

spends on the bad, strangling our minute as live loop,
putting out what needs to be woken up – passion –
hatching the egg of boredom,
while the word-wizard, though his end is lofty
– sweetening the complaint with a ray –
waters the aged wine of our suffering
with runny chatter as an artful innkeeper.
This disease gripes our dignity
may we wear plaster on our lips,
the prattling heat of the moment makes even a king run.
But our face is smooth, let us go for breakfast now!]

[Transcript/copy

“The named gentleman is the victim of his malfunctioning nerves. Regrettably, this is a fact. Otherwise, he would excel in water-polo matches like swifter heirs of the throne, but in this state, since a maddened ganglion from his abdomen sends the wrong order to his heart, his majesty is all dizziness. He suspects a ghost in creaking furniture. If a tap is dripping, his face becomes tense, he cries ‘royal blood’ and ‘you will be shed despicably’ and meanwhile, in his eyes a vision is blazing which is a sorrow to see. But cunning envy feeds his mourning. He stares at his mother, the withering queen as a cockeyed monk stares at a harlot. This leads to no good. The state machinery wants a strong personality, a good TV-face, and appropriate elocution. The whims of the named gentleman are a rash on our nation’s face. Therefore he is unreliable in our eyes, a disease that duty calls us to cut out of the flesh of our country. It should speak of our faithfulness that we did not delay in tapping his conversations. We recommend a car accident after which the radio would play classical music for a few days. With a capital M: With devotion to your Majesties. Seal, two copies; Polonius.”] (1984, pp. 7-8)

The first part of the poem, “Egy királyfi borotválkozik” [A Prince Is Shaving] can be interpreted as a rewriting of Hamlet’s great soliloquy; this is another example of the fragmentary afterlife of *Hamlet*). There are several phrases and sentence structures that remind one strongly of Arany’s version of the great soliloquy. Especially the closure – the last three sentences – allude to this particularly noticeably. The sentence beginning “Eként az ágasnyelvű színlelés” [Thus forked-tongued pretence] recalls Arany’s translation of “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all”; the one starting “E betegség méltóságunk csikarja” [This disease gripes our dignity] is

reminiscent of “the native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought”. Phrases such as *tűrni* [to bear] and *oly tett* [such an act] are also apt examples. Even the exclamation at the end of the poem reminds one of “Soft you now [...]” (III/1; 87-89).

It can also be interpreted as a poem by Hamlet that Polonius reads and reports on to Claudius and Gertrude. In a more literal sense, it can be read as a monologue of Hamlet – a conversation with himself while shaving – on which Polonius eavesdrops. However, the poem is also concerned with poetry in general, for instance, it is against florid language and it criticises the word-wizard who does a shallow job. It also expresses the necessity of speaking about what one notices, reinforcing the view of the poet as a witness and a commentator.

“Átirat” makes the reader envisage an officious Polonius dictating a letter to his secretary, making sure that the punctuation expresses flattery. (The implied narrative situation matches the form of the prose poem.) This Polonius is ridiculed for his confidence that language expresses what he wants it to express. The postmodern perception of language – in which this poem operates – challenges this view: language cannot be governed, it is rather the other way around, the speaker is at the mercy of language.

The subtitle of this part of the poem is multireferential. The noun constituting the subtitle means ‘copy’ as well as ‘transcription, rewriting’ in Hungarian. This paratext can thus point to the piece of official communication that Polonius’s secretary is preparing. This, in itself, will be a translation of what Polonius dictates: we see this report or letter in the making. This metatextual aspect can be extended and given broader significance: it may indicate that poetry, and all verbal art, involves an act of transcribing, rewriting or, with the dominant metaphor of the

present thesis, translating. The reason for this is at least twofold: a ‘new’ text reworks previous utterances or scripts – this is the intertextual aspect –, and it also can transform, translate preverbal material, feelings or an internal stream-of-consciousness – what Kristeva terms the semiotic – into the verbal, the symbolic (cf. Minier 2004, pp. 76-78).

The poems discussed above represent only a selection of *Hamlet*-inspired Hungarian poetry, and the ‘classification’, the rationale of the discussion, is also only one of the possibilities.¹⁸⁸ Elaborating on these tendencies and on the related case of the connection of the self-addressing poem with *Hamlet* serves to highlight Hamlet’s embeddedness in the story of the Hungarian nation (though some poems, such as Kiss’s and Kálnoky’s, suggest a more universal scope) by the role of ‘the’ national poet being given a Hamletian or Yorickian hue.

¹⁸⁸ Other examples include Béla Bodor’s (born 1954) poetry volume *Ragtime a Vénősző Barommal. Versek a huszadik századból*, which has been referred to in Part One Chapter Three with regard to the afterlife of the phrase *véősző barom*.

CONCLUSION: Claiming Shakespeare as Our Own

Hamletről még sohasem hallottam, hogy „tisztá irodalom”. Nem is az. Hamlet – a legmagasabb, amit eddig az emberi szellem létrehozott – egyszerűen jó darab. Hamlet jó üzlet is. Hamlet ezenkívül „szórakoztató” olvasmány is. Legalább engem egy életre elszórakoztat.

[I have never heard it said of *Hamlet* that it is ‘pure literature’. Neither is it so. *Hamlet* – so far the highest achievement of human genius – is simply a good play. *Hamlet* is good business, too. In addition, *Hamlet* is also an entertaining read. At least for me it is a lifetime’s entertainment.] (Kosztolányi 1942c, p. 244)

“ghosts do haunt the rewriting process”
(Zabus 2002, p. 5)

Whose is Shakespeare, who has a right to claim Shakespeare and, for that matter, *Hamlet*? This may seem an idle question, yet the long history of the appropriation of Shakespeare and, particularly *Hamlet*, suggests that for some Shakespeare functions as a status symbol and a locus of proprietary rights. As Shurbanov and Sokolova remind us, there are “multiple claims on the Bard’s heritage” (2001, p. 15): Shakespeare and his exemplary text, *Hamlet*, have been commandeered by a number of different communities. *Appropriation*, following the Latin adjective *proprius*, means making something ‘one’s own’. There is a clear connection between appropriation and translation in a broad sense. The term *translation* – or rather, its Latin counterpart, *translatio* – derives from the verb *transfero*: ‘take over, take across’. As with translation and adaptation, these can also be seen as interlocking metaphors. Translations do appropriate a text for a new audience, while appropriation implies the taking over of a work by another community as its own. In this sense, translations are appropriations, but the act of appropriation also has a noteworthy translational quality.

Shakespearean appropriation can be examined both in its diachronicity and synchronicity. Acculturation – appropriation by other languages and cultures – is only one of a number of means. A diachronic overview would survey how Shakespeare has been appropriated at different historical times (for example, the Shakespeares of the Restoration, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, postmodernism), whereas a synchronic perspective would demonstrate the specific ways and areas in which this appropriation takes place (for instance, genres, art forms, different ethnic communities and ideologies “recruiting” Shakespeare).¹⁸⁹ For example, there are Shakespearean romances (among others, Erika Jong’s 1986 novel *Serenissima*) and Shakespearean detective stories (for instance, Michael Innes’s 1937 novel *Hamlet, Revenge!* and so on).¹⁹⁰ Shakespeare and his *Hamlet* have been pressed into service to exemplify concepts, especially newly introduced ones (for example, the Oedipus complex). The art form of the film also justified itself, among others, through its appropriation of Shakespeare productions (think of the first Shakespearean silent films).¹⁹¹ Shakespeare has been ‘manipulated’ – no disrespect intended – to popularise musical genres such as the rock opera (including the Hungarian rock operatic *Hamlets* by Feró Nagy and, more recently, by Balázs Lencsés) and the Broadway musical (*West Side Story* topicalising *Romeo and Juliet*; *Kiss Me, Kate* reworking *The Taming of the Shrew*; and *The Boys from Syracuse* inspired by *The*

¹⁸⁹ The phrase *recruiting* is borrowed from Ciglar-Žanić 1994. It also appears in Yachnin 2001 (p.48).

¹⁹⁰ For an analysis of romances of this kind see Osborne 1999, and with regard to sources on Shakespearean crime fiction see Lanier 2002, p. 181. Hundreds of English detective stories use Shakespearean fragments for their titles. The present author is also indebted to Dr Terry Hale, for drawing her attention to particular examples of Shakespearean detective fiction.

¹⁹¹ The video and DVD compilation entitled *Silent Shakespeare* gives the following explanation on its back cover: “In its infancy film was regarded as a rather lowbrow medium, and the budding film industry attempted to elevate its cultural status by imitating the theatre. Adapting the works of Shakespeare was the filmmakers’ greatest challenge...” Cartmell, too, states: “The ‘Shakespeare’ speakies were produced not only to elevate the status of cinema but to establish or display a actor’s credentials” (2000, p. 23).

Comedy of Errors). Ideologies that have ‘claimed’ Shakespeare include socialism (Gáspár’s Hamlet resembles a repentent communist saint) and spiritualism (of which both Hamlet and Horatio are followers in Juhász’s novel), as discussed in Part Three.¹⁹² These are illustrative examples of using Shakespeare, and *Hamlet*, as a “confirmation of [one’s] worldview” (Marowitz 1991 cited Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 18).

In the 20th century ‘Shakespeare’ appears to be an authority-providing name in various schools of literary theory. There is a great deal of Shakespearean adaptation taking place within criticism, for instance as a product of editorial practices (cf. Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 17). An important cultural way in which a theory makes itself understood and accepted is very often through examples drawn from Shakespeare. Ernest Jones’s interpretation of *Hamlet*, though often attacked, is legendary. Lacan’s reading of *Hamlet*, cryptic though it may be, is a highly valued example of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Such is the case with the appearance of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism on the critical stage; they both rely heavily on Shakespeare in terms of exemplary material. Postcolonialist criticism has also established itself with the aid of Shakespearean material. Examples include the Prospero complex and the Caliban complex, “a pair of reciprocal neuroses” which may be traced to Octave Mannoni’s 1950 work *Psychologie de la colonization* (Bate 1994, p. 124). Later George Lamming (1960) and Frantz Fanon (1952) further developed some of these concepts which became so central to postcolonialism (cf.

¹⁹² A recent case of appropriating *Hamlet* by impregnating it with religious ideology is an 1994 production acted by prisoners in Opole (Poland). The director Przemysław Pałosz adapted the third act of Józef Paszkowski’s nineteenth-century translation of *Hamlet*, carrying out a ‘satanic interpretation’. In sharp contrast with Juhász’s play, “[t]he main assumption which determined the overall interpretation of *Hamlet* was that spiritualist contacts are really contacts with Satan, who takes on the appearance of the called spirit” (Pałosz 1998, p. 139). At the same time, this is also an example of theatre as learning experience.

Bate 1994, pp. 124-128). Translation Studies is no exception. For instance, Romy Heylen's *Translation, Poetics, and the Stage: Six French Hamlets* (1993) was published as the third item in the prestigious series *Translation Studies* (Routledge).

Among Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* excels in eliciting interpretation upon interpretation and 'fuelling' a rivalry between theoretical approaches. It has also served as a vehicle for the expression of a variety of positions and for experimentation with different forms. Lionel Abel, who defines *Hamlet* as a metadrama (and, indeed, defines metadrama by reference to *Hamlet*), claims:

People have grown tired, I suspect, of thinking about *Hamlet*; also, of reading further explanations of the play. Will not each new interpretation prove to be a misinterpretation – the moment, that is, it stops being new? This is what has happened again and again, to *theory on theory, explanation after explanation*, many of which began by provoking our interest – only to disappoint us as wrong. (1963, p. 40, my emphasis)

This observation does not stop Abel from succumbing to the same cultural practice. The name *Shakespeare* is with no doubt an umbrella term associated with innumerable artefacts and procedures of cultural production.

Chantal Zabus claim that different periods have their respective basic text (in her wording, pre-texts) for frequent rewriting:

Each century has its own interpellative dream-texts: *The Tempest* for the seventeenth century; *Robinson Crusoe* for the eighteenth century; *Jane Eyre* for the nineteenth century; *Heart of Darkness* for the turn of the twentieth century. Such texts serve as pre-texts to others and underwrite them. (2002, p. 1)

Further on she argues that *The Tempest* has kept its appeal for rewriting for nearly four centuries. The present thesis shows that so has *Hamlet*. However, Zabus's view can be taken a step further by proposing that it is not only centuries or periods that have their dream-texts through which they can enter into dialogue with the (artistic or political) establishment and imagine an alternative state of affairs. Different nations

or generations, gender-based and otherwise structured subcultures, may also have their own dream-texts. (Most of these appropriative contexts or configurations are recognised by Zabus in terms of *The Tempest* at least.) For Hungarians, for instance, *Hamlet* has certainly been an ‘interpellative dream-text’. One needs to add in haste: it has not been so for Hungarians only. “Hamlet is Germany, Hamlet is Poland” – this is how Manfred Pfister commences his comparison of the German and Polish acculturations of *Hamlet* (1998, p. 18).

The appropriation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as a central text had an element of emulation and competition in Central and Eastern Europe. Another pertinent, not to say more specific, term for the phenomenon is nostrification or, in its original form, *Nostrifizierung*. This dates from 1858 and was first used by the theatre director Franz Dingelstedt (Pfister 1994, pp. 77-78 and Pfister 1998, p. 19). This term, too, derives from the Latin: the adjective *nostrus* means ‘our’. Further related terms are naturalisation (for example, Dávidházi 1998) and indigenisation (often used with regard to postcolonial Shakespeares). There seems to be a latent, unofficial competition taking place within cultural historiography as to which nation had the first mention of Shakespeare, produced the first translation, the first translation from the ‘original’, the first performance, the first collected edition; which set up a Shakespeare Society or Committee before the others; and so on and so forth. (If the focus is on one particular culture, the question relates to the moment the first reference to Shakespeare dates from, when the first translation was prepared and published, and so on.) As Gary Taylor succinctly puts it, “Shakespeare accumulates superlatives: the greatest X, the most widely Y, the most often Z” (1999, p. 197).

This attitude is still traceable even in contemporary critical discourse. For the sake of illustration here is a passage (which serves an introductory purpose in its

original context) claiming that Eastern Europe nostrified Shakespeare to a greater extent than the rest of the world: “In Eastern Europe, more than anywhere else, Shakespeare’s plays have recently been appropriated for political interpretations [...]” (Stříbrný 2000, p. 1). A debateable assumption underlying this statement is that ‘Eastern Europe’ – a fuzzy term itself – has a rather unified approach to Shakespeare. Furthermore, the author of the book asserts that recently this ‘Eastern Europe’ politically appropriated Shakespeare to a greater extent than any other cultures. This statement is unjustifiable and it is coterminous with what Péter Dávidházi terms a Shakespeare cult.

Is a nostrified Shakespeare still Shakespeare, though? This has been the subject of a recent debate within Shakespeare studies. Thomas Healy in 1997 announced with some irony and regret the advent of a “protean Shakespeare”¹⁹³, claiming that:

Shakespeare studies in the last decade have become familiar with the idea of Shakespeare wearing different guises in different social and historical contexts, and have accepted that there are many Shakespeares, rather than one. (1997, p. 209)

Despite giving such a concise summary of certain recent (and not so recent) directions of interdisciplinary research, Healy also expresses his worries:

If Shakespeare is credited with a capacity to play all roles, in another sense he is capable of playing no role but that of a fetishised cipher through which varying groups claim authenticity or legitimacy for particular social or cultural platforms. (1997, p. 214)

This view was expressed in an ingenious and argumentative article on Shakespeare’s appropriation in ‘Europe’ (another term that is currently under serious revision as a result of postcolonial theory, among other factors). Healy cautiously warns us against

¹⁹³ Healy uses expressions such as “protean Shakespearian identities” and “protean plethora of Shakespearian representations” (1997, p. 211) and “protean, placeless Shakespeare” (1997, p. 223).

seeing a highly acculturated artefact as ‘Shakespearean’ just because it is ‘manufactured’ under the legitimating name of ‘Shakespeare’. As it is apparent from his article, he does not necessarily view the presence of artefacts related to Shakespeare in a Central or Eastern European country as examples of a common European heritage. Commenting on an article by Janja Ciglar-Žanić that elaborates on a Croatian performance of *Titus Andronicus*, as well as reflecting on Boika Sokolova’s account of her viewing experience of a *Romeo and Juliet* production in Bulgaria, Thomas Healy contends, “Central to such a production, and the perspective behind it, is a recognition that this *Romeo and Juliet* is not Shakespeare’s, but Bulgaria’s” (Healy 1997, p. 228). This suggests that the main perspective when assessing a production like this should rather be that of Bulgarian culture than that of Shakespeare studies. Healy’s observation that Bulgarian productions of Shakespeare or, for that matter, of any other author, can be best assessed with a thorough knowledge of the culture in which they were produced is not unreasonable. But then, how can one conduct research on a cultural artefact without a profound knowledge of the given language and cultural context? To this extent, a Bulgarian performance of Shakespeare can only be understood within a Bulgarian cultural context. Nevertheless, there is no reason why different headings or fields of studies, such as Shakespeare studies, Bulgarian Studies, theatre studies, translation or appropriation studies, cannot be combined in the interest of greater versatility.

Parenthetically, Shakespeare’s (however ‘distorted’) presence in Central and Eastern European cultures is far from being the only evidence of these cultures’ perhaps belated, yet continuous, productive and critical response to Western European literatures. Styles, genres, ideologies and specific texts have always been received, translated, otherwise reworked, and criticised. Most of the countries of the

region have a noted tradition of teaching the ‘great books’ of ‘the Western canon’ (intertwined with or parallel to the teaching of their own literatures). ‘East-Central Europe’ is part of ‘European’ literary culture, not because of Shakespeare’s often clearly domesticating appropriation, but on the basis of these cultures’ consistent and programmatic modelling of their modern literary establishments on Western European examples (cf. the discussion of central texts in Part One Chapter Two).

It appears from Healy’s comment that even experts on literature or theatre may find it difficult to recognise how massively adapted Shakespeare, and especially *Hamlet*, is in other cultures. Yet, it further supports the present author’s argument that Shakespeare’s is not an intact *oeuvre* even within its own native culture. A process of appropriation, in many ways parallel to what happened in other European countries, has taken place in Britain as well, where a variety of rewrites guarantee the survival of the Shakespeare cult. These vary from David Garrick’s and his contemporaries’ hardly recognisable adaptations through children’s/young adults’ versions and comics to Tom Stoppard’s “Fifteen Minute Hamlet” and the Reduced Shakespeare Company reworkings. Though comparisons are odious, Shakespeare’s work is hugely appropriated even in its own ‘homeland’. This phenomenon obviously counts as intralingual, or rather, intracultural translation, but it is just as overwhelming as a phenomenon as that of the appropriation of Shakespeare in other languages and thus, cultures.

Why would a 2000 production by the English Shakespeare Company showing Romeo as an extraterrestrial be more Shakespearean than the Pralipe Company’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1992), directed by the Romany poet Rahim Burhan, in which the couple are eating grapes while kissing as part of their wedding night celebrations, in

accordance with Macedonian customs?¹⁹⁴ Why would Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film version of *Hamlet* set in the 19th century be any more Shakespearean than Kozintsev's 1964 film *Hamlet*, which seeks to capture the atmosphere of Stalin's dictatorship? Why would the 2003 Pécs production of *Hamlet* (discussed in Part Three) be any less Shakespearean than any contemporary English-speaking performance that uses a similarly complex theatrical language when translating the play from page to stage?

Healy draws the conclusion that "Shakespeare is lost to history by claiming he is in every history" (Healy 1997, p. 217). However, the cultural history of a number of nations suggests that Shakespeare is indeed there in many histories as a founding figure of enlightened (and, almost by definition, pro-Western) culture, and as a continuous presence is an identity-conforming force from that moment. Andrzej Zurowski asserts that:

The Polish people talk through Shakespeare about their own politics, history, power structures, jobs, orders, and disorders.... His plays have been the mirror of our times; and through them we have seen the artistic, but not simply artistic, transformation of our history. (cited Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 12)

Shurbanov and Sokolova point out that Shakespeare played a similar role in Bulgaria: "Through him, among other things, the Bulgarians aspired to constitute their 'Europeanness'" (2001, p. 23). They contend that Shakespeare's work is "not only inseparable from the context in which it first took shape, but also from the subsequent four hundred years of his domestic and multicultural appropriation" (2001, p. 18). And, as Jonathan Bate remarks (not without superlatives), "his has been many nations

¹⁹⁴ The former remark is based on personal viewing experience in Hull New Theatre, the latter information is borrowed from Stříbrný 2000 (p. 141).

and can potentially be every nation, and that is why he matters more than any other writer there has ever been, and that is why he is a living presence in the new Europe [...]” (1994, p. 115).

Shakespeare was a dominant power mechanism at the birth of modern Hungarian national literature, and – almost as a ghost – has witnessed the nation’s story from then on. It is not only Kosztolányi’s and many other individuals’ cultural memories that *Hamlet* accompanies, but it also chaperons or, rather, haunts the life of the nation:

No merely anthropological analysis of the mid-nineteenth century Hungarian cult of Shakespeare could explain its psychological motives without taking into account the needs generated by the specific historical circumstances: in order to console and give strength, literature after 1849 was expected not only to interpret life but to justify it, and the ensuing ideal of literature had a quasi-religious function that harmonized with the new quasi-religious idiom of the discourse about Shakespeare. (Dávidházi 1989, p. 143)

Within the Hungarian context, translation has played a crucial role in the abovementioned process, which is closely associated with the idea of nation-building. It is telling that István Vas considered translation the most patriotic genre (1974, p. 539). As Ágnes Vargha succinctly summarises,

Bár a fordítói tevékenység nélkülözhetetlen a világirodalom, az idegen népek megismerésére – mégis elsősorban nemzeti ügy. „Magyar hiányérzetet” elégít ki, azzal a „türelmetlen mohósággal” mely a költőben él, amikor az idegen művet tolmácsolja. A jelentős magyar alkotássá vált fordításműveknek megtermékenyítő hatásuk van az eleven irodalomban.

[Although translational activity is indispensable for getting to know world literature and foreign nations, it is still primarily a national cause. It satisfies a Hungarian feeling of absence with an impatient greed that lives in the poet when s/he interprets the foreign work. Translations that have become significant Hungarian works have an impregnating influence on living literature.] (Vargha 1991, p. 166)¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ The internal quotations in this citation are from István Vas.

As Part Three of this thesis has elaborated, within Hungarian poetry influenced by *Hamlet* there are signs of both universalism and presentism – if we take the latter term to be associated with appropriation. Hamlet and Yorick appear as epitomes of the poet in general but also of the Hungarian poet in particular since *Hamlet* is closely intertwined with the story of the nation – often in conjunction with other *loci* of cultural memory, such as the myth of Petőfi.

The present thesis has been more concerned with the ‘how’ than with the ‘why’ of the process of nostrification, “less interested in causes than in effects” (Nora 1996, p. XXIV). Shakespeare (that is to say the *oeuvre* rather than the historical figure) has not achieved such an important central or sacred status ‘single-handedly’. Ghosts – often of fathers, of founding fathers even, and not always strictly Shakespearean ones, have also contributed to this. This thesis has drawn attention at least a few important Hungarian ghosts – for example, Arany and, to a lesser extent, Petőfi – who have played a role in making Shakespeare an honorary Hungarian.

One might say that the Hungarian naturalisation of Shakespeare has scaled new highs (perhaps, from a more traditionalist perspective, to the extent of ‘distorting’ or ‘disfiguring’ the Bard). However, it is not only Shakespeare who gave a Western or European passport to other nations; the process is, in fact, reciprocal. Shakespeare has also been awarded a Hungarian passport.¹⁹⁶ As Alexander Sinclair observes in his essay entitled “Shakespeare and Arany”,

“Shakespeare is a great Hungarian poet.” I heard this remark shortly after I came to Hungary. It struck me as amusing at the time; but, after longer residence and closer acquaintance with the Hungarian literary and theatrical scene, I have come to realise that, in a sense, this apparent quip can be taken quite seriously. I am now more conscious of the extent to which Hungary has taken Shakespeare to itself; has assimilated him into the national cultural

¹⁹⁶ The passport metaphor has been inspired by Shurbanov and Sokolova’s usage (2001, p. 23).

heritage; so that *he has become*, indeed, *a great Hungarian poet*. (1964, p. 54, my emphasis)

Corresponding to this, is a latent wish in some Hungarian cultural documents to justify that Shakespeare, the ‘real one’, also cared about Hungarians – even if this does not compare to how much Hungarians are concerned with him. The patriotic motive is made quite explicit in Blanár’s compilation of Shakespearean aphorisms, where, at the very end of the collection, he concludes with in an editorial intervention: “I beg to remark in closing that in the play: ‘Measure for Measure’ (Act I. scene 2) mentioning [sic!] is made of us, Hungarians” (c. 1927, unpaginated). The wish to be recognised is extended to Shakespeare’s (native) nation as well: “Nem tudom, megülnék-e az angolok halálának évszázad fordulóját, ha magyarnak született volna [I’m not sure if the English celebrated the centenary of his birthday had he been born a Hungarian]” (Riedl 1916, p. 36).

Thomas Healy laments the current cultural practice of terming – in his view – too many artefacts ‘Shakespearean’:

Since all deployments of Shakespeare become seen as somehow Shakespearian, there are no agreed critical mechanisms to reject, as illegitimately Shakespearian, any appropriation of the plays. (1997, p. 214)

As various examples in this thesis have demonstrated, there is no end to Hamletian ramifications – to the translation of *Hamlet* – in Hungarian culture. Nor is it only ‘high culture’ that reworks Shakespeare and, thus, is subject to canonisation, but popular or middlebrow culture, too (for example, the Gáspár case study in Part Three). With all due respect for Healy’s concern, it seems to be futile to measure their ‘Shakespeareanness’ or to determine whether it is their ‘Shakespeareanness’ or ‘Hungarianness’ that takes precedence. Shakespeare cannot be viewed without considering ‘his’ reception history whether in ‘his’ native culture or elsewhere.

Postcolonialist translation theory reassessed the metaphor of *cannibalism* so that it is not seen as a hostile attitude, but as one of making the other part of themselves. This insight derives from Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira (1999), and has been taken up by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999, especially pp. 4-8). This sheds further light on appropriation in its original sense: ‘making something one’s own’, incorporating something out of respect. Appropriation is not to be seen as negative and dangerous: it is rather inevitable and a stimulus to discussion.

This study has examined the Hungarian translations of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, emphasising that retranslation is also a case of intracultural translation apart from the – perhaps more transparent – intercultural aspect. This insight is a very rarely recognised one in Translation Studies and in literary theory. Paul de Man interpreted Walter Benjamin as follows: “[Y]ou cannot, says Benjamin, translate the translation; once you have a translation you cannot translate it any more. You can translate only an original” (1986, p. 82). However, having examined the afterlife of Arany’s *Hamlet*, the above quoted view can be seriously interrogated through numerous counterexamples. This thesis has stressed the interrelatedness of the Hungarian *Hamlet* translations with each other as well with as other texts, and the interdependence of translation strategies with theatrical interpretation.

Having worked with an intertextual concept of both translation and performance, this thesis has shown that when everyday language as well as academic discourse refers to translations and performances *of* a certain play, these are, under closer scrutiny, *based on* their ‘source’, in an intertextual relationship with the ‘original(s)’, rather than merely replicating it.

This thesis has not set out to provide an interpretation of *Hamlet*, less still to stress the relevance of certain existing interpretations over others. Instead, our main

concern has been *Hamlet*, or rather, ‘Hamlet’ as a palimpsest or textual apparatus, and the Hungarian layers of this ghostly, mysteriously re-appearing and ever enlarging textual network. As the teacher figure of Marcell Benedek’s *Hamlet tanár úr* [Professor Hamlet] explains to his student and potential future ‘successor’ at the university, “[M]indenkire jellemző a maga Hamletje. Torz munka lesz abból, ha az ön Hamletje összekeveredik az enyémmel” [Our Hamlets are characteristic of us. It would be a fake if your Hamlet got mixed up with my Hamlet.] (1928, pp. 14-15). Examining a Hamletian proliferation in Hungarian culture, one finds that *Hamlet* has been claimed by various agents and communities through translation (in a literal as well as a broader sense), and many of these *Hamlets* or Hamletian appearances are ‘mixed up’ in some way, for example, connected to Arany’s work. To put it in a quotation appropriated from Barthelme: “Dead, but still with us, still with us, but dead” (1975, p. 3).

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APPENDICES

Appendix One

Item	Shakespeare	Locus	Vajda (1839)	Arany (1867)	Zigány (1899)	Telekes (1901)	Szabó T. (1929)	Eörsi (1983)	Eörsi (1999)	Mészöly (1996)	Nádasdy (2001)	Jánosházy (2002)
1	Words, words, words	II/2; 192	Szót, szót, szót	Szó, szó, szó	Szavakat, szavakat, szavakat	Szót, szót, szót	Szavakat, szavakat, szavakat	Szó, szó, szó	Szó, szó, szó	Szó, szó, szó.	Szavak, szavak, szavak	Szó, szó, szó.
			Word, word, word	Word, word, word	Words, words, words	Word, word, word	Words, words, words	Word, word, word	Word, word, word	Word, word, word	Words, words, words	Word, word, word.
2	Denmark's a prison. Then is the world one.	II/2; 243-244	Dánia fogság. Akkor a' világ is az.	Dánia börtön. Úgy az egész világ is az.	Egész Dánia börtön. Úgy hát a világ is az.	Dánia tömlőcz. Akkor az egész világ is az.	Dánia börtön. Akkor hát a világ is az.	Dánia börtön. Úgy az egész világ az.	Dánia börtön. Akkor a világ is az.	Dánia börtön. Akkor az egész nagyvilág is az.	Dánia börtön. Akkor az egész világ az.	Dánia börtön. Akkor az egész világ az.
			Denmark is imprisonment. Then so is the world.	Denmark is a prison. Then the whole world is also one.	The whole of Denmark is a prison. Then so is the world.	Denmark is a prison. Then so is the world.	Denmark is a prison. Then so is the world.	Denmark is a prison. Thus the whole world is one.	Denmark is a prison. Then so is the world.	Denmark is a prison. Then the whole great world is also one.	Denmark is a prison. Then so is the whole world.	Denmark is a prison. Then the whole world is one.
3	mobbled	II/2; 498	rongyos	bóbás	bóbás	zilált	fejékes	fátyolos	fátyolos	fátylas	leples	eltorzult
			ragged	bun-wearing	bun-wearing	dishevelled	with a head dress	veiled	veiled	veiled	~cloaked	
4	sullied/solid	I/2; 129	szilárd	merő	szilárd	túlsvivos	szívós	merő	sűrű, beszennyezett	merő	mocskos	túltúl szilárd
			solid	pure	solid	too hardy	hardy	solid	dense, soiled	pure	dirty/filthy	way too solid
5	What's Hecuba to him, or he to her, That he should weep for her?	II/2; 553-554	Mi Hekubának ő, vagy neki Hekuba? Hogy érte könyves?	Mi néki Hecuba, s ő Hecubának, Hogy megsirassa?	Micsoda neki Hecuba? Vagy Hecubának mi ő, Hogy megsiratja?	Mi néki Hekuba, s ő Hekubának? Hogy úgy sirassa?	Hát Hecuba miye neki vagy Hecubának ő miye, hogy úgy megsiratja?	Mi neki Hecuba, s ő Hecubának, Hogy megsirassa?	Mi Hekuba neki s ő Hekubának, Hogy megsiratja?	Mi néki Hecuba, s ő Hecubának, Hogy így sirassa?	Mi köze Hecubához, vagy Hecubának hozzá, Hogy sirjon érte?	Mi néki Hecuba, s ő Hecubának, Hogy megsirassa?
			What's he to Hecuba or Hecuba to him that he is tearful for her?	What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba for him to weep for her?	What's Hecuba to him? Or what is he to Hecuba that he weeps for her?	What's Hecuba to he to Hecuba? To weep for her like that.	Well, what [what relation] is Hecuba to him or what is he to Hecuba that he weeps for her like that?	What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba to weep for her?	What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba that he weeps for/over her?	What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba to weep for her like this?	What has he got to do with Hecuba, or Hecuba to him, for him to weep for her?	What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba for him to weep for her?
6	Frailty, thy name is woman	I/2; 146	Gyengeség asszony a neved	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	Gyarlóság, nő a te neved.	Gyarlósági! asszony a neved!	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	Jellemgyengeség, nőnemű vagy	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved...
			Weakness, your name is woman	Frailty, your name is woman!	Frailty, your name is woman!	Frailty! Your name is woman.	Frailty, your name is woman!	Frailty, your name is woman!	Frailty, your name is woman!	Frailty, your name is woman!	Character flaw, you are female	Frailty, your name is woman...
7	O my prophetic soul!	I/5;41	Oh sejdítés	Ó, az én próféta lelke!	oh, én próféta lelke!	Oh én jól sejtő lelke!	Ó, az én jó s lelke!	Ó, az én próféta lelke!	Ó, próféta lelke!	Ó, az én próféta lelke!	Ó, a próféta lelke!	Ó, az én próféta lelke!
			O suspicion	O my prophetic soul!	O, my prophetic soul!	O my well suspecting soul!	O my foretelling soul!	O my prophetic soul!	O my prophetic soul!	O my prophetic soul!	O the prophetic soul of mine!	O my prophetic soul!
8	Something is rotten in the state of Denmark	I/4; 90	Meg van romolva Dániába valami.	Rohadt az államgépben valami	Megrothadt Dániában valami.	Biz Dániában rothad valami! ...	Valami elkorhadt a dán államban.	Rohadt egy – s más az államgépezetben.	A dán államban rothadt valami	Rohadt az államgépben valami	Itt, Dániában valami rohad.	Rohadt az államgépben valami
			Something has gone off/is out of order in Denmark.	Something is rotten in the state machine	Something has rotten in Denmark.	Something is indeed rotting in Denmark! ...	Something has putrefied in the Danish state.	This and that is rotting in the state machinery.	Something is rotting in the Danish state.	Something is rotten in the state machine	Something is rotting here in Denmark.	Something is rotten in the state machine.

Item	Shakespeare	Locus	Vajda (1839)	Arany (1867)	Zigány (1899)	Telekes (1901)	Szabó T. (1929)	Eörsi (1983)	Eörsi (1999)	Mészöly (1996)	Nádasdy (2001)	Jánosházy (2002)
			When sorrow comes, it doesn't come on its own but in a group.	When sorrow comes, it doesn't come as a sole sentinel: it breaks in as a whole squad.	if trouble comes, it doesn't come by one but it breaks in on us in swarms/flocks	If trouble comes, it doesn't come as a single sentinel but as a whole squad!	When sadness comes, it does not only come as a solitary spy but a whole army.	If sorrow comes, it doesn't come as a single sentinel: it breaks in as a whole squad.	Sorrow doesn't come one by one like spies do, but in a group.	Pain never is a solitary sentinel: it comes in an army.	Sadness is not a lonely attacker: it comes in an army.	Sadness never comes as a lonely spy: it does a whole squad.
18	But look, the morn in russet mantle clad Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill	I/1; 170-171	De im a hajnal rózsá öltönyében Jár a kelet halmának harmatán.	De im, a hajnal öltve bíborát Ott járdal a domb harmatján, keletre keletre.	De im, a hajnal bíbort ölt, amott, S fönt jár a domb harmatján, keletre keletre.	de im A hajnal bíbor köntösét felöltvén, Kelet halmán már harmatot tiporgat.	De nézd: a reggel rótszín fátyol-köpenyben át keletnek sétálgat a harmatos hegyen	(S hogy felriadt mint bűn sujtotta lény A rettentő hívásra.) Ott sétál a domb harmatján, keletre harmatján, keletre	De lám, a hajnal bíbor köntösében A keleti domb harmatába gázolt.	De lám, a Hajnal ölti bíborát. S ott jár a harmatos domboldalon!	De nézd, a hajnal vörös köpenyében Ott jár felől a keleten a hajnal.	De nezd csak, rőt köpenyben már a hegypást Harmatjában lép keleten a hajnal.
			But here is dawn in her rosy suit walking on the dew of the heap of the east.	But here is the morning putting on her crimson, she walks over there on the dew of the hill, to the east.	But here is dawn putting on crimson over there and walking on the dew of the hill up there, to the east.	But here is dawn putting on her crimson garment/robe, is now treading on dew on the heap of the East.	But look: the morning in a russet/reddish-brown veil-cloak is walking across the dewy mountain	(And how he/it's been woken by the terrific call as if a sin-stricken being. There he/it strolls on the dew of the hill, to the east	But behold, Dawn puts on her purple, and is walking there on the dewy hill-slope!	But behold, Dawn puts on her purple, and is walking there on the dewy hill-slope!	But look: dawn I her red cloak is walking up there on the hills	But look: in a russet cloak dawn leaps on the dew of the mountain pasture in the east.
19	Give me that man That is not passion's slave	III/2; 71-72	Add azon Embert nekem, ki szenvedélyinek Nem rabja	Férfit nekem, ki szenvedélye rabja Nem lett soha!	Férfit mutass, ki szenvedélyének nem rabja	Férfit énnekem! A ki nem rabja semmi szenvedélynek	Hozz ily férfit nekem	Férfit nekem, kin szenvedély az úr	Férfit nekem, kin szenvedély nem úr	Férfit nekem, ki nem hő vágya rabja!	embert, aki nem rabja minden szenvedélynek	Férfit nekem, ki nem érzések rabja
			Give me [present to me] the man who is not a prisoner/no prisoner of his passion	A man for me, who's never become the prisoner of his passion!	Show me a man who is not a prisoner of his passion	A man for me! Who is no prisoner of any passion	Bring me such a man	A man for me whose lord is passion	A man for me whose lord is not passion	A man for me, who is not a prisoner of his heated desire!	a man who is not a prisoner of every passion	A man for me who is not a prisoner of feelings
20	There needs no ghost, my lord, come from a grave To tell us this.	I/5; 131-132	Hogy ezt kimondja, nem szorultunk Lélekre más világbul.	Tudtunkra adni, nincs szükség, uram, Sírból jövő szellemre.	Nincs szükség, uram, sirból feljövő Szellemre, hogy megmondja ezt nekünk.	Ezt, föntség, nem kell, hogy sirból jövő árny tudassa velünk.	Fenség, nem szükséges a kísértetnek kijönni a sirból, Hogy ezt elmondja nekünk.	Ezt Tudtunkra adni nincs szükség, uram, Sírból jövő szellemre.	Szellem a sirból nem kel ki, uram, Hogy ezt tudassa ezzel.	De jó uram, Kísértetről nem mondtál újat ezzel.	Ezért kár volt a sirjából kiszállni, Hogy ezt közölje.	Nem kell sirból kelt szellem, jó uram, Hogy ezt megudjuk.
			To utter this we did not need a Soul from another world	There's no need for a spirit from the grave to let us know this.	There's no need, my lord, for a spirit coming up from the grave to tell us this.	Your highness, this is not needed to be told us by a shadow from the grave.	Your highness, there's no need for the ghost to come out of his grave to tell us this.	To let us know this there's no need, my lord, for a spirit from the grave.	Spirits do not get out of their graves, my lord, to make this known	But my good lord, You haven't said anything new about a ghost with this.	It was a waste of time for him/it to get out of his grave to announce this.	There's no need for a spirit out of the grave, my good lord, in order for us to learn this.

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21	Use every man after his desert, and who shall scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.	II/2; 524-525	Bánj az emberekkel érdemök szerint, 's ki kerüli ki a korbácsot! Bánj velők tén becsületed és méltóságod szerint. Minél kevesebbet érdemelnek, jóságodnak annál nagyobb érdeme van.	Bánj mindenkivel érdeme szerint: melyikünk kerüli el a mogyorópalcát? Bánjon velők saját embersége és méltósága szerint: minél kisebb az ő érdemök, annál nagyobb érdem a szívesége.	ha mindenkivel érdeme szerint bánnának, melyikünk kerülné el a megbotozást? Bánjék a maga embersége és méltósága szerint: minél kisebb az ő érdemük, annál nagyobb érdem az ön szívesége	Bánjék mindenkivel érdeme szerint, ugyan melyikünk maradna botozatlan? Bánjék saját embersége s méltósága szerint velők; s minél kisebb az ő érdemök, annál értékesebb lesz az ön szívesége.	Bánj minden emberrel érdem szerint s ki menekül meg a korbácstól?! Saját becsületességed s rangod szerint bánj velők: minél kevésbbé szolgálják meg azt, a méltóságát megérdemli, annál nagyobb érdem az ön szívesége.	Bánj mindenkivel érdeme szerint: melyikünk kerüli el a mogyorópalcát? Bánjon velük saját embersége és méltósága szerint: minél kevesebbet érdemelnek ök, annál nagyobb érdem a maga szívesége.	Ha mindenkivel érdeme szerint bánnának, ki kerülné el a korbácsot? Bánjon velük saját tisztességé és méltósága szerint: minél kevesebbet érdemelnek, annál nagyobb érdem a maga nagylelkűsége.	Bánj velünk érdemünk szerint, melyikünk kerüli úgy el a korbácsot? Bánjon velük a tulajdon embersége s méltósága szerint: minél kevésbé szolgálhatnak rá, annál nagyobb érdem lesz a kegyelmed szívesége.	Ha mindenkivel érdeme szerint bánná, ki üszná meg a korbácsot? Bánjon velük a méltósága szerint: saját becsülete és méltósága szerint: így minél kevesebbet érdemelnek, annál kevesebbet érdemelnek, annál dicséretesebb a maga nagyvonalúsága.	Ha érdeme szerint bánsz mindenkivel, ugyan ki üssza meg korbács nélkül? Bánj mindenkivel a magad tisztessége és méltósága szerint: minél kevésbé érdemlik meg, annál dicséretesebb a te jószágod.
			Treat people according to their merit and who will escape the scourge? Treat them according to your own honesty and dignity. The less they deserve the greater is the merit of your goodness.	Treat everybody according to their merit: who will escape the escape the hazelnut cane? Treat them according to their own humaneness and dignity: the smaller their merit the greater the merit of your favour.	If everybody were treated according to their merit, which one of us would escape caning? Treat [them] according to your humanity and dignity: the less merit they have for it the greater merit your favour will be.	Treat everybody according to their merit only, which one of us would remain uncaned? Treat them according to your humaneness and merit: and the smaller their merit is the more valuable your favour will be.	Treat every person according to merit and who will escape the scourge?! Treat them according to your own honesty and rank: the least they deserve it, the more merit you have.	Treat everybody according to merit: which one of us would escape the escape the hazelnut cane? Treat them according to your own humaneness and dignity: the least they deserve the greater merit is your favour.	If everybody were treated according to their merit who would escape the scourge? Treat them according to your own honesty and dignity: the least they deserve, the greater merit your generosity will be	Treat us according to our merit, which one of us would then escape the scourge? Treat them according to your own humaneness and dignity: the least they deserve it, the greater merit your favour will be.	If you treated everybody according to their merit, who would who would dodge/flee the scourge? Treat them according to your own honesty and dignity: thus the least they deserve the more praiseworthy your liberality is.	If you treat everybody according to their merit, who would get away without the scourge? Treat everybody according to your honesty and dignity: the less they deserve it the more praiseworthy your goodness is.
22	Yea from the table of my memory I shall wipe away all trivial fond records, (All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past That youth and observation copied there)	I/5; 98-101	Igen, letörölök emlékezetem Faláról minden apró dolgokat (Könyvbeli mondást, képet, multak nyomdokát 'S mit ifjúság 's figyelem gyűjtött reá.)	Igen, letörölök emlékezetem Lapijáról minden léha jegyzetet, (Könyvek tanácsát, képet, benyomást, Mit vizsga ifjúkor másolt reá)	Letörölök Elmém lapijáról minden rongy, silány Emléket, (könyvekből gyűjtött tudást, Es minden benyomást, mit ifjúság, Vagy megfigyelés vésett föl reá)	Emlékezésem lapijáról letörölök Minden hiú jelt, (könyvek oktatását, Minden képet a mult minden nyomát, Mit ifju vágy irt rá s tapasztalás.)	Igen, emlékezetem lapijáról letörölök minden köznap érdekess bejegyzést, (minden könyvben látottat, minden alakot, minden régi benyomást, mit az ifjú kor s a megfigyelés másolt oda)	Igen, letörölök emlékezetem Lapijáról minden léha jegyzetet, (Könyvek tanácsát, képet, benyomást, Mit ifjúság irt rá, s megfigyelést)	Igen, letörölöm emlékezetem Táblájáról a csip-csup irkatírkát, (Könyv-bölcsességet, rajzot, nyomatot, Mit ifjúság rótt rá s tapasztalat.)	Igen, kitörölök én Agyamból minden léha jegyzetet, (száz könyv tanácsát, ábráját, nyomát, mit fürkész, ifjú elme rögzített.)	Jó. Kitörölök az emlékezetemből minden mellékes, ostoba tudást, (minden böles mondást, képet, kósza élményt, mit belemásolt fiatal figyelem)	Mától kitörölök Agyamból minden felszínes bejegyzést, (Olvasmányt, képet, régi benyomást, Mit vizsla ifjú szem másolt bele)

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			Yes, I will wipe off the wall of my memory every tiny thing, sayings from books, images, traces of pasts, and what youth and attention collected there.	Yes, I will wipe off the page of my memory every flighty note, the advice of books, images, impressions that observing youth copied on it	I will wipe off the page of my mind all ragged, paltry memories, knowledge gathered from books, and all the impressions that youth or observation carved on it	From the page of my memory I will wipe off every vain sign, the scholarship of books, every image, and every trace of the past that was written on it by youthful craving and experience.	Yes, I will wipe off the page of my memory all interesting everyday notes, all seen in books, all figures, all old impressions copied there by youth and observation	Yes, I will wipe off the page of my memory every flighty note, the advice of books, images, impressions and observations written there by youth	Yes, I will wipe off the board of my memory the miscellaneous scribbles, the book-wisdom, drawings, imprints notched on it by youth and experience.	Yes, I will wipe out of my brain all flighty notes, the advice of a hundred books, impressions recorded by the scrutineering/searching and youthful mind.	Fine. I will wipe out of my memory all irrelevant, silly knowledge, all wise sayings, images, the odd experience copied into it by my youthful observation/vigilance	From today I will wipe out of my brain every superficial note, reading, image, and old impression.copied there by searching young eyes
23	Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.	IV/5; 43-44	Uram, tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de nem mik lehetünk.	Uram Isten! Tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de nem tudjuk ám, mivé lehetünk.	Uram-Istenem! tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de nem tudjuk ám, hogy mivé lehetünk	Szent Isten! Tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de nem mivé lehetünk.	Uram, mi tudjuk, hogy mik vagyunk, de nem, hogy mik lehetünk.	Uramisten! Tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de nem tudjuk mivé lehetünk	Uram, tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de nem tudjuk, mivé lehetünk.	Uramisten! Csak azt tudjuk, mik vagyunk, de azt bezzeg nem, hogy mivé leszünk.	Uram, azt tudjuk, hogy mik vagyunk, de azt nem, hogy mi lehet belőlünk.	Istenem, annyit tudunk csak, hogy mik vagyunk, de azt már nem, hogy mi lehet belőlünk.
			Lord, we know what we are but not what we can be.	God my Lord! We know what we are yet we don't know what we can become.	My Lord my God! We know what we are yet what we don't know what we can become.	Holy Lord! We know what we are but we don't know what we can become.	Lord, we know what we are but not what we can be.	God my Lord! We know what we are but we don't know what we can become	Lord, we know what we are, but we don't know what we can become.	God my Lord! We only know what we are, yet not what we will become.	Lord, we know what we are, but not what may become of us.	My God, we only know what we are but not what may become of us.
24	If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now, if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.	V/2; 216-220	Ha ma meg-lesz, nem történik utóbb, ha nem jövődőben lesz, meg leend ma; ha ma nem lesz meglesz utóbb. Minden az elkészültség	Ha most történik: nem ezután; ha nem ezután, úgy most történik; s ha most meg nem történik, eljő máskor: készen kell rá lenni.	Ha most lesz meg, nem lesz ezután történik; ha nem ezután, akkor most történik: s ha most meg nem történik, majd meglesz máskor: de mindig készen kell lenni rá	Ha most lesz meg, nem lesz a jövőben; ha nem a jövőben: most kell meglennie. S akár most, akár a jövőben lesz meg, mindenkor készen kell vární rá	[page missing]	Ha most történik; nem később jön, ha nem később jön, akkor most történik; s ha most meg nem történik, eljön később,csak egy fontos: felkészülten várjuk.	Ha most történik, nem később jön; ha nem később jön, most történik, s ha most meg nem történik, mégis eljön később. Csak egy a fontos: felkészülten várjuk.	Ha most esik meg, holnap már semmi baj. Ha nem holnap, legyen hát ma. S ha ma meg nem esik, ma holnap úgyis meglesz. Készen kell lenni rá- ennyi az egész.	Ha most kell meglennie, akkor nem máskor lesz; ha nem máskor lesz, akkor most; és ha nem most, akkor előbb-utóbb úgyis! Készen kell lenni rá.	Ha most esik meg, akkor nem holnap, Ha nem holnap, akkor ma. Ha nem most, hát meglesz ezután. Készen kell állni – ennyi az egész.
			If it is today, it won't be later, if it is not in the future, it will be today; if it is not today, it will be later. The readiness is all.	If it happens now: it doesn't happen later, if not later, then it happens now, if it doesn't happen now it will come later: one has to be ready for it.	If it is now, it won't happen later: if not later then it happens now; and if it doesn't happen now it will be some other time: yet one always has to be ready for it.	If it is now, it won't be in the future, if not in the future, it must be now. Be it now or in the future, one has to be ready for it all the time.		If it happens now; it won't come later, if it doesn't come later, it will happen now; and if it doesn't happen now, it will come later. The only important thing is to wait (well) prepared.	If it happens now; it won't come later, if it doesn't come later, it will happen now; and if it doesn't happen now, it will come later. The only important thing is to wait (well) prepared.	If it comes about now, there's nothing wrong tomorrow. If not tomorrow, then let it be today. If it does not take place today, it will soon. One has to be ready for it – that is all.	If it must be now, it won't be another time; if it isn't another time, then it will be now; and if not now, then it will be sooner or later anyway! One has to be ready for it.	If it comes about now, it does not tomorrow. If not tomorrow, then today. If not today, then it will be later. One has to be ready – this is all.

Item	Shakespeare	Locus	Vajda (1839)	Arany (1867)	Zigány (1899)	Telekes (1901)	Szabó T. (1929)	Eörsi (1983)	Eörsi (1999)	Mészöly (1996)	Nádasdy (2001)	Jánosházy (2002)
25	O, what a noble mind is here o'earthrown!	III/1; 152	Oh mely dicső lélek romlott el it!	Oh mely dicső ész bomla össze iten!	Oh, mily dicső ész bomlott össze itt!	Oh mily nemes, nagy lélek tört meg itt!	O mily nemes sziv pusztult itten el!	Mily nemes ész bomlott itt össze!	Milyen nemes szellem dőlt romba itt!	Mily nagyszerű ész bomlott össze itt!	A pompás elme hogy szét van zilálva!	O, milyen fényes ész borult el it!
			O what a glorious soul has decayed/gone out of order here!	O what a glorious mind has collapsed here!	O what a glorious mind has collapsed here!	O what a noble, great soul is broken here!	O what a noble heart has perished here!	What a noble mind is collapsed here!	What a noble spirit has fallen here!	What a great mind has collapsed here!	How deranged the splendid mind is!	O what a bright mind is darkened here!
26	To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.	II/2; 178-179	[...] becsületesnek lenni mai világban annyi, mint tíz ezer közül választatni ki	becsületes lenni, a hogy most jár a világ, annyi, mint egynek kétezerből lenni kiszemelve.	[...] becsületesnek lenni, a hogy most folyik a világ, annyi, mint hogy ha valakit tízezer ember közül szemelnek ki.	Becsületesnek lenni a világ e mai forgásán olyasmi, hogy tízezer ember közül, jó, ha egyre is ragad.	[...] ahogy ma járja a világ becsületesnek lenni annyi, mint tízezer között egyedül lenni.	[...] becsületesnek lenni, ahogy most jár a világ, annyi, mint egynek lenni kétezerből kiszemelve.	Becsületesnek lenni a mai világban annyi, mint egynek lenni tízezerből.	[...] becsületesnek lenni itt, ahogy ez a világ forog, már annyi, mint kiválasztottnak lenni: egynek tízezerből!	A mai világban aki becsületes, az egy a tízezer közül.	Becsületesnek lenni a mai világban annyi, mint kiválasztott egynek lenni tízezerből.
			Being honest in today's world is as much as being chosen out of ten thousand	being honest, as the world flows today, is as much as if one were singled out from two thousand	being honest, as the world flows today, is as much as if one were singled out from two thousand people	Being honest in the swirl of the world today is such that it is fortunate if one out of ten thousand men are affected by it.	As the world is going now, being honest is as much as/means being alone in ten thousand.	Being honest, as the world is going now, is as much as being singled out as out from two thousand.	Being honest in today's world is like being one out of ten thousand.	Being honest here, as this world goes round, is as much as being the chosen one out of ten thousand!	In today's world the honest one is one out of ten thousand.	Being honest in today's world is like being a chosen one out of ten thousand.
27	Rightly to be great Is not to stir without great argument, But greatly to find quarrel in a straw When honour's at the stake.	IV/4; 53-56	Valóban nagynak lenni, Nem annyi mint nagy tárgyért tenni mozdulást csupán, de a' szalmáért is megküzdeni, Ha a' becsület van hozzája kötvé.	Az valódi nagy, Ki fel nem indul, ha nagy oka nincs; De szalmaszálért is küzd nagyszerűen, Midőn becsület, ami fennforog.	Az a valódi nagy, Ki föl nem indul, Ha nincs rá nagy oka: de nagyszerűn küzd szalma-szálért is, ha becsület kívánja azt.	A valódi nagyság Nem az, mely nagy ok híján föl nem indul, De az, mely szalmaszálért is vitába szállni, ha becsületünk forog a kockán!	Valóban nagynak lenni: nagy ok nélkül nem ingerülni fel, de szalmaszálért is vitába szállni, ha becsületünk forog a kockán!	A valódi nagyság Nem indul fel, ha nincs nagy oka rá, De szalmaszálért is küzd, hogyha kockán A becsület forog.	Nem az nagy, aki Nem moccan, ha nincs nyomós oka rá, De aki bagóért is küzd, ha kockán A becsület forog.	Valódi nagyság az, mely föl nem indul, ha nincs rá jó oka, de emberül helytáll akár egyetlen szalmaszálért, ha úgy kívánja azt a becsület.	Mert nem az a nagyság, Hogy csak a nagy célokra mozdulunk, Hanem hogy nagyot teszünk kis ügyért is, Ha az becsület dolga.	Valódi nagyság Nem indul fel, hacsak nagy oka nincs. De megharcol, ha becsület kívánja, Egy szalmaszálért.
			Being really great is not (as much as/does not mean/does not equal) making a move for a great issue but fight even for a straw if honour is linked to it.	S/he is really great who does not get into a rage without a major reason, but s/he fights greatly even for a straw when it is honour that is at stake.	The really great one is who does not get into a rage if s/he has no great reason: yet s/he fights greatly even for a straw if honour demands it.	Real greatness is not the one that gets into a rage without great reason, but the one that has great courage even when it comes to a straw if honour pends on it.	To be really great: not to be enraged without a great cause, but argue even for a straw if our honour is at stake.	Real greatness does not get enraged if there is no great cause for it but struggles even for a straw if our honour is at stake!	The great one is not who doesn't stir when there is no weighty reason for it, but who struggles/works even dirt cheap when/if it is honour that is at stake.	Real greatness is the one that does not get enraged without a good cause, but stands up for a single straw if honour requires so.	For greatness is not making a move only when there are great aims but doing great things in small matters too, if it is a matter of honour.	Real greatness does not get enraged unless with good cause, but fights for a straw if honour requires so.
28	'Tis brief, my lord. As woman's love.	III/2; 148-149	Jó rövid, uram. Mint az asszony szerelme.	Rövid biz az, föntség. Mint a nők szerelme	Rövid biz ez, föntség. Mint a nő szerelme.	Bizony rövid, föntség. Mint a nő szerelme.	Biz' ez rövid, fénység. Mint a nő szerelme.	Rövid volt, uram. Mint a nő szerelme.	Rövid volt, uram. Mint a nő szerelme.	Rövidnek rövid. Mint a nő szerelme.	Rövid, fénység. ugye? Mint a nők szerelme.	Rövid, annyi szent. Mint a nő szerelme.
			It is pretty short, sir. As (married) woman's love.	It is short indeed, your majesty. Like the love of women	It is short indeed, your majesty. As woman's love.	Indeed it is short, your majesty. As woman's love.	This is short indeed, your majesty. As woman's love.	It was short, sir. As woman's love.	It was short, sir. As woman's love.	As for length, it is short enough. As woman's love.	It's short, your majesty. isn't it? As women's love.	It's short, for sure. As woman's love.

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29	Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine, It sends some precious instance of itself After the thing it loves.	IV/5; 161-163	'S midőn finom, becses úgy zálogot küld azután magából a' kit szerete.	Gyöngéd a természet szerelme: mindig küld valamely becses ajándokot annak sírjába, kit szeret.	Gyöngéd a természet szerelme ; és mindig küld némi szép ajándokot annak sírjába. akit megszeret.	Gyöngéd természet úgy szeret. Ki gyöngéd: Valami becses dologát küldi el Szeretéhez önmaga zálogául.	A természet nemes a szeretetben s ahol pedig nemes: valami drága remekét küldi mindig az után, akit szeret	[missing]	A természet előkelőn szeret: Értékes zálogot küld távozó Szerelme után.	Gyöngéd anyánk a Természet: akit nagyon szeret, annak sírjába is ajándékot küld, ritka drágaságot.	A szeretet megfinomítja lelkünk, S egy darabját elküldi az után, Akit szeretünk.	A természet oly gyöngédén szeret, Hogy még sírjába is valami szépet Küld annak, kit szível.
			And as it is fine and precious it sends a token of itself after the one it had loved	The love of nature is tender: it always sends some precious gift into the grave of whom it loves	The love of nature is tender; and it always sends some beautiful gift to the grave of the one she grows to love.	Tender nature loves thus/so much. Who is tender: it sends something precious of hers to her loved one as a token of hers.	Nature is noble in love and where it is noble it sends some dear masterpiece of its own after the one it loves.		Nature loves exquisitely: it sends a valuable token after its departing lover.	Nature is our tender mother: it sends a gift, a rare treasure into the grave of the one(s) that it loves very much.	Love makes our soul gentle, and sends a particle of that after the one we loved	Nature loves so tenderly that she sends something beautiful even to the grave of somebody she likes.
30	[...] the rest is silence.	V/2; 363	A többiről hallgassunk.	A többi, néma csend	[...] a többi csend.	Holtnak hallgatás! ...	Csitt a többiről!	[...] a többi néma csend.	[N]incs más, csak a csönd.	A többi – csend.	[...] és innenől a csend	A többi: csend.
			Let's keep quiet about the rest.	The rest, mute silence.	The rest is silence.	Silence for the dead! ...	Shush about the rest!	The rest is mute silence.	There's nothing but silence.	The rest – silence.	And from here: silence	The rest: silence.
31	A little more than kin, and less than kind.	I/2; 65	Több mint öcs, és kevesebb tán mint fiv.	Több mint rokonság, s nem épen rokonszenv.	Több, mint rokon, de rokonszenv ne'kül.	Tulsok rokonzás, túlkevés rokonszenv ...	Ez több mint rokonszenv s a temészetesnél kevesebb.	Több mint rokonság, s nem éppen rokonszenv.	Atyafi, mégis más atya fia.	Több mint rokonság, s nem éppen rokonszenv.	Édes öcséd és keserű fiad.	Nagy rokonság, s nincs benne csöpp rokonszenv.
			More than nephew and maybe less than son.	More than kinship and not quite sympathy.	More than kin, yet without sympathy.	Too much kinship, too little sympathy ...	This is more than sympathy and less than natural.	It is more than kinship and not quite/exactly sympathy.	Relative [father's son] still the son of a different father.	It is more than kinship and not quite/exactly sympathy.	Your dear/sweet nephew but bitter son.	Great relation, but there isn't a nit of relatedness [literally: sympathy] in it.
32	You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will not more willingly part withal – except my life, except my life, except my life.	II/2; 215-217	Semmit nem vehet el uram mit örömesebb adnék; kivénvén életemet, életemet.	Semmit se vehet tőlem, uram, amitől oly örömet megválnék; kivéve az életem, az életem.	[...] semmit sem vehetne el tőlem, a mitől örömesebb megválnék, mint ettől, – kivéve az életemet.	Uram, mit sem vehet tőlem, a mitől oly szívesen válnék meg; kivéve az életemet, az életemet!	Semmit el nem vehet tőlem, mitől örömet meg ne válnék ; kivéve az életem, életem, életem.	Semmit se vehet tőlem, uram, amitől oly örömet válnék meg kivéve az életem, életem, életem.	Semmit sem vehet tőlem, uram, amitől szívesebben válnék meg – ha csak nem az életem, az életem, az életem.	Semmit se vehet tőlem, uram, amitől oly örömet megválnék - kivéve az életem, életem, életem.	Nincs semmi a világon, uram, amitől ilyen boldogan megválnék – csak az életem, az életem, az életem.	[...] nem vehetsz el tőlem semmit, amitől szívesebben megválnék... kivéve az életem, az életem, az életem.
			You cannot take anything away sir, that I would give more happily, excepting my life, my life.	You cannot take anything from me, sir, from which I would part so happily; except my life, my life	You couldn't take anything from me from which I would part more happily than from this – except [taking] my life.	Sir, you cannot take anything from me from which I would part with so much pleasure, except my life, my life, my life!	You cannot take anything from me from which I would not part happily, except my life, my life.	You cannot take anything from me, sir, from which I would part so happily - except my life, my life, my life.	You cannot take anything from me from which I would part with much more pleasure, unless my life, my life, my life.	You cannot take anything from me, sir, from which I would part so happily - except my life, my life, my life.	There's nothing in the world that I would part from so happily, except my life, my life, but my life, my life, my life.	You cannot take anything from me which I would part from so happily, except my life, my life.
33	O most wicked speed!	I/2; 156	Oh gonosz sietség	Oh, gonosz hamarság ...	oh, átkozott sietség	Oh vétkes hamarság	O galád gyorsaság [...]	O, züllött sietség!	Züllött sietség!	O, gonosz hamarság [...]	Ez bűn, ez a sietség!	O, átkos sietség!
			O wicked rush	O wicked haste ...	O cursed rush	O sinful haste	O vicious/heinous speed	O debauched/profligate rush!	Debauched/lewd rush!	Oh, wicked haste	This is a sin, this rush!	O curseful rush!

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34	Give it an understanding, but no tongue	I/2; 250	Értsétek azt ne mondjátok tovább.	Vegyétek észre bár, de nyelvre ne	[...] vegyétek észre, de nyelvetekre ne!	[...] vegyék csak észre, De nyelvre ne!	[...] vegyétek észbe, de nyelvetekre ne	Vegyétek észre bár, de nyelvre ne	[...] csupán szívetekre Vegyétek majd, a szájatokra nem.	[...] vegyétek észre bár, de nyelvre ne!	[...] ti tudjátok, de nyelvetek ne értse.	Észbe vegyétek csak, de nyelvre ne.
			Understand it but don't pass it on.	Take it to your mind(s) but not to your tongues. (Take notice of it but don't voice it.)	Take it to mind(s) but not to your tongues!	Take it to mind but not to tongue!	Take it into mind (i.e. consideration) but not to your tongues	Take it to your mind but not to your tongue. (Take notice of it but don't voice it.)	Then take it to your hearts only but not to your tongues.	Take notice of it but don't voice it. / take it to your mind but not to your tongue.	Know about it. but your tongues shouldn't understand it.	Keep it in mind but not on your tongues.

Appendix Two

Item	Locus in Shakespeare	Speaker	Shakespeare	Blanár	Arany	Day for which it is assigned
1	V/2; 215-216	Hamlet	We defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.	Dacolunk a végzettel, -- Egy veréb sem hullhat el a gondviselés Akarata nélkül.	[D]acolunk e baljóslattal: hisz egy verébfí sem eshetik le a gondviselés akaratja nélkül.	7 January
2	IV/4; 48-53		[A] delicate and tender prince, Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd, Makes mouths at the invisible event, Exposing what is mortal and unsure To all that fortune, death, and danger dare, Even for an eggshell.	A balga a jövőre nyelvet öltöget, Kitéve azt, ami nem biztos halandó Sorsnak, halálnak, vésznek, kornak – Akár egy üres tojásért.	[A] gyöngéd, kényes királyfi, Kinek becsvágytól duzzadó erélye A vak jövőre nyelvet öltöget. Kitéve azt, mi nem biztos, halandó, Sorsnak, halálnak, vésznek, kárnak egy Üres tojásért.	16 January
3	IV/5; 48-51	Ophelia	Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day, All in the morning betime, And I a maid at your window, To be your Valentine.	Holnap Szent Bálint napja lesz, mindjárt, reggel korán, és ablakodnál párodul ott leszek én, a lány.	Holnap szent Bálint napja lesz, Mindjárt reggel korán. És ablakodnál, párodul, Ott lezek, én leány.	13 February
4	III/2; 165-166	Player Queen	Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ; Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.	Nagy szeretet, fél apró kételyen: S hol a félsz nagy, nagy ott a szerelem.	Nagy szeretet fél apró kételyen: S hol a félsz nagy, nagy ott a szerelem.	14 March
5	I/3; 36-37	Laertes	The chariest maid is prodigal enough If she unmask her beauty to the moon.	A legszemérmesebb lányka is pazar, Kecseit ha bár a holdnak is fölfedi.	A legszemérmesb lányka is pazar, Kecseit ha bár a holdnak fölfedi.	19 March
6	I/3; 38-44	Laertes	Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes. The canker galls the infants of the sping Too oft before	Erény se mentes a rágalmas fulánktól. S az ifjúság harmatdús hajnalán A mételyes kór a legjárványosabb.	Erény se ment a rágalmas fulánktól, Üszög senyveszti a tavasz szülöttit Gyakran előbb, mint bimbajok	20 March

			their buttons be disclos'd, And in the morn and liquid dew of youth Contageous blasments are most imminent. [...] Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.	Az ifjú, ha más nincs, magára lázad.	fesel. S az ifjuság harmatdús hajnalán A mételyes kór legjárványosabb. [...] Az ifju, ha más nincs, magára lázad.	
7	II/2; 115-118	Polonius (reading out Hamlet's poem)	Doubt thou the stars are fire, Doubt that the sun doth move, Doubt truth to be a liar, But never doubt I love.	Kételd, hogy a nap forog, Kételd, hogy a csillagtűz ragyog. A valót, hogy az igazmondó: Csak azt ne, hogy hű vagyok.	„Kételd, a nap hogy forgandó, Kételd, csillagtűz ragyog. A valót, hogy igazmondó: Csak azt ne, hogy hű vagyok.”	10 April
8	III/2; 71-73 (with an ellipsis)	Hamlet	Give me (that) man [...] and I will wear him In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart [...].	Férfit nekem! S én szívem rejteken Szívem szívében hordom őt.	Férfit nekem, ki szenvedélye rabja Nem lett soha! s én szívem közepén, Szívem szívében hordom azt [...]	12 April
9	I/3; 85-86	Ophelia	'Tis in my memory lock'd, And you yourself shall keep the key of it.	Bezárva elmémben őrzöm és kulcsa nálad lesz.	Bezárva elmémben őrzöm, s kulcsa nálad áll.	13 May
10	I/5; 174-175	Hamlet	There are more things in heaven and earth [...] Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.	Több dolog van az égben és a földön, mintsem bölcs elméd azt elképzelni képes.	Több dolgok vannak földön és egen, Horatio, mintsem bölcselemetek Álmodni képes.	23 May
11	III/2; 230	Hamlet	No offence i' th' world.	„Kinek nem inge, ne vegye magára.”	semmi bántó a világon	24 May
12	IV/7; 115-117	Claudius	[...] nothing is at a like goodness still, For goodness, growing to a pleurisy, dies in his own too-much.	Mindig egyenlően jó nincs semmise, mert a nagyon meggyült jóság maga saját bőségébe fullad.	[M]indíg egyenlő jó nincs semmi se, Mert a nagyon meggyült jóság maga Saját bővébe fül.	27 May
13	II/2; 90-91	Polonius	[B]revity is the soul of wit, and tediousness the limbs and	Rövidség a lelke az okos beszédnek, a szóáradat csak anyag és sallang	[R]övidség lévén lelke minden okos beszédnek, a szóár pedig	2 June

			outward flourishes [...].	rajta.	Csak teste rajta és kül cífraság.	
14	II/2; 249-250	Hamlet	[T]here is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.	A világon nincs se jó, se rossz, csak a gondolkozás teszi azzá.	Nincs a világon se jó, se rossz: gondolkozás teszi azzá	12 June
15	III/2; 199-201	Player King	The great man down, you mark his favourite flies; The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies ; And hitherto doth love on fortune tend [...]	Nagy férfi bukásakor kegyence fut, a szegény kapós lesz, mihelyt előbbre jut.	Nagy férfi buktán, lásd, kegyence fut; Szegény kapós lesz, amint polcra jut [...]	24 June
16	IV/5; 53-56	Hamlet	Rightly to be great Is not to stir without great argument, But greatly to find quarrel in a straw When honour's at the stake.	Az valódi nagy, ki fel nem indul, ha nagy oka nincs, de szalmaszálért is küzd eltökélten, ha a becsület forog kockán.	Az valódi nagy, Ki fel nem indul, ha nagy oka nincs; De szalmaszálért is küzd nagyszerűen, Midőn becsület, ami fennforog.	5 July
17	III/2; 17-23	Hamlet	Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. Foir anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.	Illeszd a cselekményt a szóhoz, a szót a cselekményhez, különösen figyelve arra, hogy a természet szerénységét meg ne sértsd, mert minden olyan túlzott dolog távolesik a színjáték céljától, melynek feladata most és elejétől kezdve az volt és marad, hogy mintegy tükröt tartson a természetnek, hogy felmutassa az erénynek önábrázatát, a gúnynak önnön képét és maga az idő, a század alakját és lenyomatát.	Illeszd a cselekvényt a szóhoz, a szót a cselekvényhez, különösen figyelve arra, hogy a természet szerénységét átal ne hágd: mert minden olyas túlzott dolog távol esik a színjáték céljától, melynek föladata most és eleitől fogva az volt és az marad, hogy tükröt tartson mintegy a természetnek, hogy felmutassa az erénynek önábrázatát, a gúnynak önnön képét és maga az idő, a század testének tulajdon alakját és lenyomatát.	9 July
18	III/4; 147-151	Hamlet	Lay not that flattering unction to	Ne áltasd magad a csalóka írral, reménnyel; az	Ne áltasd lelked a csalóka írral, [...] csak	11 July

			your soul [...] it will but skin and film the ulcerous place, whiles rank corruption, mining all within, Infects unseen.	csak behegeszti hámmal a fekélyt, míg láthatlan terjed a fene s mindent aláás.	béhegeszti hámmal a fekélyt, Míg láthatatlan terjed a fene, S mindent aláás.	
19	I/2; 257-258	Hamlet	Foul deeds will rise, Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.	„Rút csíny nem marad, borítsa bár egész föld, a föld alatt.”	Rút csíny nem marad, borítsa bár egész föld, föld alatt.	24 July
20	I/2; 250	Hamlet	Give it an understanding but no tongue.	Végý észre bármit, de nyelvre semmit.	Vegyétek észre bár, de nyelvre ne	28 July
21	I/3; 59-65	Polonius	Give thy thoughts no tongue, Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar ; Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel, But do not dull thy palm with entertainment Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd courage.	A gondolatnak nyelve ne keljen nálad, se tette ferde gondolat. Légy nyájas, de ne köznapi: fürkészve válaszd meg barátaidat, aztán szorítsd őket kebledhez érckapoccsal, ámde minden első jöttment, ki nem próbált cimbora üdvözlésén ne koptasd tenyered.	A gondolatnak nyelve sose keljen Nálad, se tette ferde gondolat. Légy nyájas ámbár, de ne köznapi; Kémlelve rostáld meg barátidat, Aaztán szorítsd lelkedhez érckapoccsal; De minden első jöttment cimbora Üdvözetén ne koptasd tenyered.	29 July
22	V/1; 206-209	Hamlet	Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away. O that that earth which kept the world in awe Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw.	Fejedelmi Caesar, ha föld röge lett, talán lyukat töm, hogy kizárja a szelet. Oh, hogy aki a világ félelme volt, most egy repedt falon a folt.	Fejedelmi Caesar, ha föld röge lett, Lyukat töm, hogy kizárja a szelet; Ó, hogy ki a világ félelme volt, E sár, most egy repedt falon a folt.	1 August
23	I/2; 187-188	Hamlet	A was a man, take him for all in all: I shall not look upon his like again.	Ő ember volt, vedd akárhogyan, mását nem lelem fel soha.	Ő volt az ember, vedd akármilyen részben, Mását e földön nem látok soha.	2 August

24	II/2; 261-262	Guildenstern [Rosencrantz]	[...] I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.	A nagyravágyás olyan könnyű, olyan légies természetű, hogy még az árnyéknak is csak az árnyéka.	[É]n a nagyravágyást oly könnyű, oly légies természetűnek tartom, hogy még az árnyéknak is árnyéka.	8 August
25	II/2; 524	Hamlet	Use every man after his desert [...]	Bánj mindenkivel érdeme szerint.	Bánj mindenkivel érdeme szerint [...]	11 August
26	I/3; 70-72	Polonius	Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ; for the apparel oft proclaims the man.	Öltözz mikép erszényedtől telik, de ne torzul, gazdagon, ne cifrán, mert a ruha jellemzi emberét.	Öltözz, miképp erszényedtől telik, Drágán, ne torzul; gazdagon, ne cifrán, Mert a ruha jellemzi emberét.	12 August
27	II/2; 303-308	Hamlet	What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals- and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?	Mily remekmű az ember! Mily nemes az értelme! Mily határtalanok tehetségei! Alakja, mozdulata mily kifejező és bámulatos! Működésre mily hasonló az angyalhoz! Belátásra mily hasonló az Istenhez! A világ ékessége! Az élő állatok mintaképe! És mégis nem más, mint egy csipetnyi por.	[M]ily remekmű az ember! Mily nemes az értelme! Mily határtalanok tehetségei! Alakja, mozdulata mily kifejező és bámulatos! Működésre mily hasonló egy istenséghez! a világ ékessége! az élő állatok mintaképe! És mégis, mi nekem ez a csipetnyi por?	14 August
28	III/1; 56-60	Hamlet	To be, or not to be, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles And by opposing end them.	Lenni vagy nem lenni – ez a kérdés. Akkor nemesebb-e a lélek, ha eltűri balsorsa nyügét és csapásait, vagy ha fegyvert ragad tenger fájdalma ellen s ellenszegülve véget vet neki.	Lenni vagy nem lenni: az itt a kérdés. Akkor nemesb-e a lélek, ha tűri Balsorsa minden nyügét s nyilait, Vagy ha kiszáll tenger fájdalma ellen, S fegyvert ragadva véget vet neki?	19 August

29	(IV/5;) IV/4; 33-35	Hamlet	What is a man If his chief good and market of his time Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.	Mi az ember, ha idején vett fő java csak alvás és evés? – Barom és semmi több!	Mi az ember, Ha drága idején vett fő java Alvás, evés csak? Nem több, mint barom.	21 August
30	III/1; 83-87	Hamlet	[C]onscience does make cowards of us all, And thus the native hue of resolution Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, And enterprises of great pitch and moment With this regard their currents turn awry And lose the name of action.	Az öntudat belőlünk gyávát csinál s az elhatározás természetes színét a gondolat halványra betegíti; ily kétkedés által sok nagyyszerű, fontos terv kifordul medréből s elveszti a „tett” nevét.	[A]z öntudat Belőlünk mind gyávát csinál, S az elszántság természetes színét A gondolat halványra betegíti; Ily kétkedés által sok nagyyszerű, Fontos merény kifordul medriből S elveszti “tett” nevét	22 August
31	I/5; 108	Hamlet	[O]ne may smile, and smile, and be a villain [...]	Az ember mosolyoghat és mégis gaz lehet.	[E]mber úgy mosolyoghat s gaz lehet [...]	6 September
32	I/3; 75-77	Polonius	Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend, And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.	Kölcsönt ne végy, ne adj, mert a hitel elveszti emberét, el a barátot; viszont az adósság gazdaságod csökkenti.	Kölcsönt ne végy, ne adj: mert a hitel elveszti önmagát, el a barátot; Viszont, adósság a gazdálkodás Hegyét tompítja.	7 September
33	I/3; 68-69	Polonius	Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ; Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.	Füled mindenki bírja, szód kevés, ítéletet hallj bárkitől, de ne mondj ...	Füled mindenki bírja, szód keves; Ítéletet hallj bárkitől, ne mondj.	9 September
34	III/3; 97-98	Claudius	My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thoughts never to heaven go.	Fölszárnnyal a szó, az eszme lenn marad: Szó eszme nélkül mennybe sohasem hat.	Fölszárnnyal a szó, eszme lenn marad: Szó eszme nélkül mennybe sose hat.	11 September
35	V/2; 8-11	Hamlet	Our indiscretion sometime serves us well	Óvatosságunk néha jól segít, midőn derék tervünk	[E]gy meggondolatlan Tett néha jól segít, midőn	13 September

			When our deep plots do pall; and thta should learn us There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will [...]	hanyatlik; s ez tanítson arra: van egy istenség, aki céljaink megformálja, bármily nagyra terveztük is.	derék Tervünk hanyatlik; s ez tanítson arra: van egy istenség, aki céljaink Formálja végre, bármiképp nagyoltuk.	
36	I/3; 65-67	Polonius	Beware Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in, Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee.	Kerüld a patvart, de ha benne vagy, végezd, hogy máskor az kerüljön.	Kerüld a patvart; de, ha benne vagy, Végezd, hogy ellened másszor kerüljön.	16 September
37	I/3; 126-131 and I/3; 78-81	Polonius	[...] vows [...] are brokers not of that dye which their investments show, but mere implorators of unholy suits, Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds The better to beguile. This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow as the night the day Thou canst not then be false to any man. Farewell, my blessing season this in thee.	A fogadalmak csak alkuszfogások, nem oly színűek, mint látszatuk mutatja, csak vétkes üzlet szóvivője mind, bár látszatra jámborak, istenes kötések, hogy rászedjenek jobban. Mindenek felett légy hű önmagadhoz: így mint napra éj következik, hogy ál máshoz sem leszel., isten veled, áldásom ezt érlelje benned meg majd.	[F]ogadási [...] mind alkuszfogás, Nem oly színű, mint a burok mutatja, Csak vétkes üzlet szóvivője mind, Bár színre jámbor, istenes kötés, Rászedni jobban. Mindenek fölött légy hű magadhoz: így, mint napra éj, Következik, hogy ál máshoz se léssz.. Isten veled: áldásom benned ezt Érlelje meg majd.	18 September
38	IV/5; 78-79	Claudius	When sorrows come, they come not single spies, But in battalions.	A bú, ha jó, nem jön, mint egyes őrszem, hanem, mint egész dandár beront.	A bú ha jó, nem jó mint egyes őrszem: Egész dandár beront.	7 October
39	III/2; 375	Hamlet	They fool me to the top of my bent.	Csak addig <i>tesznek</i> engem bolonddá, ameddig a kedvem tartja.	Csak addig <i>tesztek</i> engem bolonddá, ameddig kedvem tartja.	20 October
40	I/2; 146	Hamlet	Frailty, thy name is woman [...]	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	Gyarlóság, asszony a neved!	21 October
41	III/2; 195-196	Player King	This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not	Nem örök-e a világ? Így hát az sem lehet csoda:	Nem örök e világ; az sem csoda,	27 October

			strange That even our loves should with our fortunes change [...]	hogy sorsunkkal még a szeretet is oda!	Hogy sorsunkkal a szeretet oda [...]	
42	II/2; 178- 179	Hamlet	To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.	A világ mai forgása szerint becsületesnek lenni annyi, mintha tízezer ember közül egy becsületesre akadsz.	[B]ecsületes lenni, a hogy most jár a világ, annyi, mint egynek kétezerből lenni kiszemelve.	25 November
43	III/4; and 162-164	Hamlet	Assume a virtue if you have it not. That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat Of habits evil, is angel yet in this [...]	Csinálj erényt kényszerűségből! Mutass erényt, ha nincs is. A szokás -- az a szörny, mely Tetteink öntudatát elnyeli -- angyal ebben!	Mutass erényt, ha nincs is. A szokás – E szörny, ez ördög, mely öntudatát elnyeli tetteinknek – angyal ebben [...]	27 November
44	III/1; 101	Ophelia	Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.	Igaz szívnek szegény a dús ajándék, ha az adóban csökken a jó szándék.	Nemes szívnek szegény a dús ajándék, Ha az adóban nincs a régi szándék.	29 November
45	III/2; 267	Hamlet	For some must watch while some must sleep, Thus runs the world away	Mert egyik vigyáz, másik szunnyad, így múlik el a világ.	Mert ki vigyáz, ki meg szunnyad: így foly le a világ.	17 December
46	III/1; 68-76	Hamlet	[...] the respect That makes calamity of so long life. For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay, The insolence of office, and the spurns That patient merit of th'unworthy takes, When he himself might his quietus make With a bare	A meggondolás az, mi a nyomort oly hosszan élteti: mert ki viselné a kor gúnyát és csapásait, zsarnok bosszúját, gögös ember dölyfét, utált szerelme kínját, pör- halasztást, A hivatalnak packázásait, s mind a rúgást, mellyel méltatlanok bántalmazzák a tűrő érdemet: ha nyugalomba küldhetné magát egy pusztá törrel?	E meggondolás az, Mi a nyomort oly hosszan élteti: Mert ki viselné a kor gúny- csapásait, Zsarnok bosszúját, gögös ember dölyfét, Útált szerelme kínját, pör- halasztást, A hivatalnak packázásait, S mind a rugást, mellyel méltatlanok Bántalmazzák a tűrő érdemet: Ha nyúgalomba küldhetné magát Egy pusztá törrel?	26 December

			bodkin?			
47	III/1; 76-82 and 66-68	Hamlet	Who would fardels bear, To grant and sweat under a weary life, But that the dread of something after death, The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn No traveler returns, puzzles the will, And makes us rather bear those ills we have Than fly to others that we know not of? For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, Must give us pause.	Ki hordaná e terheket izzadva, nyögve élete fáradalmain, ha rettegésünk egy halál utáni valamitől – a nem ismert tartomány, melyből nem tér vissza az utas – le nem lohasztja kedvünk és inkább késztet túrní a jelen rosszat, mint sietni ismeretlenek felé. Mert hogy milyen álmok jönnek majd a halálban, ha majd leráztuk e porhüvelyt, ez visszadöbbent.	Ki hordaná e terheket, Izzadva, nyögve élte fáradalmin, Ha rettegésünk egy halál utáni Valamitől – a nem ismert tartomány, Melyből nem tér meg utazó – le nem Lohasztja kedvünk, inkább túrní a Jelen gonoszt, mint ismeretlenek Felé sietni? Mert hogy mi álmok jönnek a halálban, Ha majd leráztuk mind e földi bajt, Ez visszadöbbent.	27 December
48	I/2; 72-73	Gertrude	[A]ll that lives must die, Passing through nature to eternity.	Meghal, aki él s a természet útján öröklétre kél.	[M]eghal, aki él, S természet útján szebb valóra kél.	29 December

Appendix Three

The Shakespearean text according to the Good Quarto

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grant and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Lenni? nem lenni? ez tehát a kérdés. Annak-é nemesebb lelke, aki a megmérgeedett csillagzatok csapkodásait békével eltüri, vagy annak, aki az inség seregei ellen felfegyverkezik s ellenkezve ér véget? – Meghalni – elalunni; - semmivel sem több; s ezzel az elalvással lelkünk gyötrelminek s az élet megszámlíthatatlan nyomorúságának határt vetni. Oly vég ez, melyet buzgóan kelle óhajtunk. – Meghalni, - elalunni, -- elalunni? – talán álmodni is! – Ez ám a göcs! Mert micsoda álmok jöhetnek majd reánk halálálmodunkban, minekutána már a gázolásból kivergődtünk, ez az ami bennünket tartóztat. Ez az az elmélkedés, amely reá bir, hogy magunkat egy ily hosszú élet nyomorúságainak alája vetjük. Mert ki állaná ki különben az újabb újabb ostoroztatást, az üldözők fenességét, a bosszantását a kedélyeknek, a megvetett szerelem aggódásait, a késedelmes igazságot, a negédségeket a nagyoknak, s azokat a döféseket, amelyeket a tűrő jámbor érdem az esztelenségtől szenved, ha egy kis hegyes vassal azt viheti véghez, hogy a halotti harangot megkondítsák? ki akarna inkább egy ily sanyarú élet terhe alatt pihegni, tikkadni? De a titkos sejdítése annak a halált követő valaminek (egy utazó sem tért vissza azon esmeretlen tartományból!) elrémíti a lelket, s arra veszi, hogy inkább szenvedjünk kínokat, melyek már rajtunk fekszenek, mintsem újaknak siessünk elikbe, melyeket még nem esmérünk. Így tesz a lelkiismeret bennünket gyávákká; így oszlik széjjel az eltökélt végzés eleven színe az elmélkedés halavány fénye előtt, s feltételeink, melyek nagyok és nemesek, megfordítják folyamatjokat, s megszűnnek hatni.

To be or not to be? this is thus the question. Is his/her soul nobler who peacefully bears the whips of angered stars or s/he who becomes enarmed/armoured against destitution and ends in opposition? To die – to fall asleep; - nothing more than that; and by this falling asleep to place borders to the tortures of our souls and the innumerable sorrows of life. This is an end that we should arduously desire. – To die, - to fall asleep, -- to fall asleep? – perhaps even to dream! – This is the knot! For what dreams may come to us in our death-dream after we have got out of the wading/wallowing, this is what hinders us. This is the meditation that brings us to subdue ourselves to the sorrows of such a long life. For who would bear otherwise the newer and newer scourging, the dickens of persecutors, being annoyed by the supercilious, the worries of scorned love, the belated truth, the unctuousness of the great, and the stabs that the patient godly/pious/guileless merit tolerates from senselessness, if with a small piece of pointed/sharp iron s/he can achieve the deathly bells being rung/tolled? who would rather want to puff/pant, to thirst under the burden of such a sour life? But the secret suspicion of this something coming after death (not a traveller has returned from that unknown province!) scares the soul and brings him/her to bear tortures already lying upon them rather than we would rush ahead of new ones that we do not know so far/as yet. This is how conscience makes us cowards, this is how the lively colour of resolute ceasure dissolves before the pale colour/hue of doubtfulness, and our great and noble ambitions turn back their flow, and stop influencing/operating.

Kazinczy (early 1800s)

Lenni, vagy nem lenni? Ez tehát a' nagy kérdés! Annak é nemesebb lelke, a'ki a' megmégesült csillagzatok' csapkodásait békével tűri, vagy annak, a'ki az inség sergei ellen fegyvert kap s' viaskodva ér véget? Meghalni – elalunni! semmivel sem több; 's ezzel az elalvással lelkünk gyötrelmeinek 's az élet számtalan nyomorúságainak határt vetni. Oly vég ez, melyet buzgóan kellene óhajtánunk! – Meghalni – elalunni! --- Elalunni? – talán álmodni is! - - Ez ám a' göcs! – Mert micsoda álmok jöhetnek majd reánk halálalvásunkbann, minekutánna már a' gázolásból kivergődtünk, ez megérdemli a fontolást! ez az az elmélkedés, mely a' nyomorúságoknak hosszas életet ad! Mert ki állaná ki külbömbenn az újabb újabb ostoroztatást, az Üldözők feneségét, a' Kevélyek bosszantását, a' megvetett Szerelem aggodalmait, a' késedelmes Igazságot, a' Negédségeket a' nagyoknak, 's azokat a' döféseket, melyeket a' tűrő jámbor érdem az oktalanságtól szenved, ha egy kis hegyes vassal magát szabadságba teheti? ki akarna inkább egy illy sanyarú élet' terhe alatt pihegni, tikkadni? - - De a' titkos sejdítése annak a' halált követő valaminek - - eggy Utazó sem tére még vissza azon isméretlen tartományból! - - elrémíti a' lelket, 's arra veszi, hogy inkább szenvedjünk kínokat, melyek már rajtunk fekszenek, mint újaknak siessünk eleikbe, melyeket még nem ismerünk. Így tesz a' lelk'isméret bennünket gyávákká; így lepi-el az eltökélt Végezés eleven színét a' kétségeskedés halavány fénye; 's feltételeink, melyek nagyok és nemesek, megfordítják folyamatjokat 's megszűnnek hatni!

To be or not to be? This is thus the great question! Does he have a nobler soul who peacefully bears the whips of angered constellations or s/he who takes arms against the armies of destitution and reaches his/her end fighting? To die – to fall asleep! No more at all, and by this falling asleep to erect a border to the tortures of our soul and the numerous sorrows of life. This is an end that we should arduously desire! To die – to fall asleep ---To fall asleep? – perhaps even to dream? This is indeed the knot! For what kind of dreams can come then to us in our death-sleep after we have got out of the wading/wallowing, this deserves the consideration! This is the meditation that gives sorrows a lengthy life! For who would otherwise stand the newer and newer scourging, the wretchedness of Persecutors, the annoyance of the Haughty, the worries of despised Love, belated Truth, the Unctuousness of the great, and the stabs that the patient godly/pious/guileless merit tolerates from senselessness, if with a small piece of pointed/sharp iron s/he can put him/herself to liberty? Who would rather want to puff/pant, to thirst under the burden of such a sour life? -- But the secret suspicion of this something coming after death -- not a traveller has returned from that unknown province! -- scares the soul and brings him/her/it to bear tortures already lying upon us rather than rushing ahead of new ones that we do not know so far/as yet. This is how conscience makes us cowards, this is how the pale colour/hue of meditation evades the lively colour of resolute ceasure, and our great and noble ambitions turn back their flow, and stop influencing/operating!

Döbrentei (1821)

Lenni vagy
Nem lenni? hát ez a' kérdés. – Mi szebb
Lelkünk előtt, eltûrni a dühös
Csillagzatok nyilát 's fulánkjait,
Vagy kart emelni vész'ink tengerére
És szembe szállva, abba ölni a ' bajt?
Meghalni; - és alunni; - Nincs egyéb?,
'S azt hinni hogy velünk elnyugszik a'
Szív jajja 's a' már vérünkben folyó
Ezernyi seb, melly rank örökbe száll.
'Sz az illy kimuláson még kapni kell.
Meghalni; - és alunni; - úgy! alunni!
'S tán álmodozni; - itt a' bökkenő!
Mert millyen álmot virraszt a' halál
Midőn lehullt e' romlékony zavar
E' csillapíthat. – E' tisztelteti
A' hosszú élet szenyvesztését.
Ki állaná ki másképp csúfjait
Bűnös korának és az Elnyomó'
Erőszakát 's negédjét a' kevélynek,
A' megvetett szerelmnek szégyenét,
A' renyhe törvényt a' nagy ranguak'
Dölyfösködését, a' gyom karczait
A' jámbor érdemen : Ha egy kicsiny
Kis mesztelen tör nyugtos búcsut ad.
Ugyan ki nyögné válla terheit
Ki izzadozna illy kínéletért ?
De a' halál utáni kép ijeszt.
S ama titokban rémlő honnyra : mellynek
Forrása mellől egy utas se jött
Még vissza, - a' feltétel zsibbadoz.
E' kíztet osztán inkább tûrni itt.
Mint ismeretlen baj közzé rohanni.
Igy tesz pulyává lelki érzetünk.
's a' felriadva készült eltökéllés
Halványodottan áll az ész előtt
Mellynek szavára a' legfennnyen kelőbb
Szándék folyamja más felé csap el.
'S a' tett, nevével elvész.

To be or
Not to be? Well, this is the question. –
what is more beautiful
Before our eyes, to bear the arrow and
stings
Of angry constellations,
Or to lift an arm against the sea of our
perils
And opposing it, killing our sorrow ?
To die; – and to sleep; – is there nothing
else ?
And to believe that the trouble of the heart
and the thousand
Bleeding wounds that we inherit will cease
with us.
One should even be keen on such an
extinction.
To die; – and to sleep; – thus: to sleep !
And perhaps to daydream; – here is the
catch!
For what dream is in the wake of death
When this transient muddle has fallen,
This can soothe us. This makes the
suffering of a long life respectable.
Who would otherwise bear the ugliness
Of his/her sinful age and
The violence of the oppressor and the
demure of the supercilious,
The shame of scorned love,
The lazy law, the haughtiness of the
High-ranking, the scratches of weeds
On the godly/guileless merit: If a tiny
Little bare dagger gives you a peaceful
farewell.
Who would sigh under the burden of his
shoulders
Who would sweat for such a life of
tortures ?
But the picture of what comes after death
frightens us.
And the secretly emerging homeland,
beside the well of whose not a single
Traveller has returned, – the
intent/resolution is going numb.
This makes us/one rather bear [things] here
Than rush into the midst of unknown
trouble.

This is how our sentiment makes us
cowards.

And the intention stands pale before the
reason/wit/intellect

At the word of whose

The river of the loftiest intention will flow
in a different direction.

And the deed perishes, alongside its name.

Vajda

Lenni vagy nem lenni, - ez itt a` kérdés
Mi nemesbb? - a` rossz szerencse nyilait
Eltűnni vagy fegyvert emelve ellene,
Legyőzni őt. - Meghalni és aludni,
És semmi több, de tudni hogy keserveink
E` test örökség, és szivünk ezernyi
Búbánatai mind véget érnek ott.
Ha ez való, ez oly célhoz jutás,
Mellyet kívánni kell. - Meghalni és aludni;
Aludni `s tán álmodni is. Oh itt a csomó!
Minő álmok jönnek a` halálban/Akárminő
bár a halálnak álma:
Mikor leráztuk e` mulóság köntösét
Biztos szünet vár ránk. Itt a tekintet,
Mellyet szül hosszú életünk baja.
Másképp ki tűrné súlyos vesszejét az
Időnek el, - `s a` zsarnok igtalan nyomását?
`Sértésit a` kevélynek? és a` megvetett
szerelmnek kinját? törvény késedelmét?
A` hivatal bajait és a` gyalázatot
Mellyet türelmes érdem a méltatlanoktól
Szokott aratni, és a` midőn magát
Egy tűvel nyugalomba teheti?
Terhet ki hordna nyögve `s izadottan?
`S az életet ki ne vetné le teheert?
De ama halál utáni ...
van némi féltő a halál után
Egy ismeretlen hon, melynek köréből
Nem tért zarándok vissza még.
Ez tart zavarban bennünket, `s szivelteti
A` mostan terhet, inkább mint tova
Hajt ismeretlen új bajokhoz. -
Igy tesz gyávákká a lelki-ismeret
Mindünket, így az elszántság természetes
Vérszíne károsítva van
Halvány mázával a fontolgatásnak
A` nagyszerű, sükerben dús vállalatok
Elhagyják e` miatt örvényüket
`S a tett nevet elvesztik.

To be or not to be – this is the question
here.
What is nobler? To endure the arrows of
bad fortune
Or to defend it by raising arms
Against it. To die and to sleep,
And no more, but to know that our sorrows,
This bodily inheritance and our hearts'
thousand
Sadnesses, will all end there.
If this is true, this means to reach a goal
Which should be desired. To die and to
sleep;
To sleep, perhaps even to dream. Oh here
is the knot!
What dreams will come in death/Whatever
the dream of death is
When we have shaken off this
attire/raiment/dress/suit/garment of
transience
A sure/steadfast break will await us. Here
is the countenance
Born by the trouble of our long lives.
Otherwise who would bear the heavy
stick/wand
Of time, and the tyrant's unfair pressure?
The offence/insults of the haughty? And
the pain of scorned
Love? The delay of law?
The problems/burden of office and the
ignominy
That patient merit reaps from the
unworthy,
When s/he can send him/herself to peace
with a needle?
Who would carry a burden moaning and
sweating?
And who wouldn't quit/drop life for [to get
rid of/discharge] the burden?
But that certain ... after death
There is something fearful/fearsome after
death
An unknown homeland from the
circle/aura/halo of which no pilgrim has
returned.
This keeps us confused and makes us bear
The current burden rather than directing us

Further to unknown (new) problems/
troubles/ worries.

This is how conscience makes us all
cowards

Thus the natural blood-colour/hue of
resolution is damaged

with the pale coating/cover of
consideration/thought for themselves.

Because of this the great success-laden
ventures leave their eddies/swirls/vortices

And lose the name deed.

Arany

Lenni vagy nem lenni: az itt a kérdés.
Akkor nemesb-e a lélek, ha tűri
Balsorsa minden nyűgét s nyilait,
Vagy ha kiszáll tenger fájdalma ellen,
S fegyvert ragadva véget vet neki?
Meghalni – elszunnyadni – semmi több;
S egy álom által elvégezni mind
A szív keservét, a test eredendő,
Természetes rázkódtatásait:
Oly cél, minőt óhajthat a kegyes.
Meghalni – elszunnyadni – és alunni!
Talán álmodni: ez a bökkenő;
Mert hogy mi álmok jönnek a halálban,
Ha majd leráztuk mind e földi bajt,
Ez visszadöbbent. E meggondolás az,
Mi a nyomort oly hosszan élteti:
Mert ki viselné a kor gúny-csapását,
Zsarnok bosszúját, gőgös ember dölyfét,
Útált szerelme kínját, pör-halasztást,
A hivatalnak packázásait,
S mind a rugást, mellyel méltatlanok
Bántalmazták a tűrő érdemet:
Ha nyugalomba küldhetné magát
Egy pusztá törrel? Ki hordaná e terheket,
Izzadva, nyögve élte fáradalmin,
Ha rettegésünk egy halál utáni
Valamitől – a nem ismert tartomány,
Melyből nem tér meg utazó – le nem
Lohasztja kedvünk, inkább túrni a
Jelen gonoszt, mint ismeretlenek
Felé sietni? Ekképp az öntudat
Belőlünk mind gyávát csinál,
S az elszántság természetes színét
A gondolat halványra betegíti;
Ily kétkedés által sok nagyszerű,
Fontos merény kifordul medriből
S elveszti “tett” nevét

To be or not to be: that is the question here.
Is the soul nobler if s/he bears
All the burdens and arrows of his/her
misfortune,
Or if s/he stands up against his/her sea of
pains,
And by grabbing up/at arms end it?
To die – to doze off – no more;
And to end by a dream all
The grief of the heart, the natural
primary/atavistic
Shocks of the body
Is such a goal that the pious may desire.
To die – to doze off – to sleep!
Perhaps to dream: this is the catch
(difficulty, obstacle, hurdle);
For what dreams will come in death,
When we have shaken off all this worldly
trouble
Hinders us/me. This is the consideration
That keeps destitution alive so long;
For who would bear the derision-blows of
the age,
The revenge of the tyrant, the haughtiness
of the supercilious,
The pain of hated love, the delay of trial,
The insolence of office,
And all the kicks with which the unworthy
hurt the tolerant merit:
If s/he could send him/herself to peace
With a bare dagger? Who would carry
these burdens
Sweating, moaning over the pain of his/her
life
If our dread of a something after death
The unknown province
From which no traveller returns,
Does not make our spirits languish; rather
bear
The current wickedness than hurry
Toward unknown ones? Thus conscience
Makes cowards of us all
And the thought sickens the natural colour
of resolution into pale;
Via such doubts many great important
resolutions
Turn out of their beds
And lose the name ‘deed’

Zigány

Mi jobb: a lét, vagy nem lét? – Az a kérdés:

annak nagyobb-e a lelke, a ki türi
A balszerencse ostorát, nyügét,
Vagy azé, ha ki tenger búja ellen
fegyvert ragad, és véget vet neki?
Meghalni – alvás – semmi több; s ha
mondják,
Hogy ez az álom mind elvégzi majd
A szív fájdalmát, testünk véle szűlött,
Természetes sok szenvedéseit: –
Oly vég, minőre szent is vágyhatik.
Meghalni – és aludni: ah, aludni!
S álmodni tán: – ez ám a bökkenő;
Mert, hogy mily álmot hoz ránk a halál,
ha már leráztunk minden földi nyügöt:
ez visszatart. Ez a fontolgtatás
ad hosszú létet minden szenvedésnek.
Ki tűrné másként sorsa vak dühét,
Zsarnok igáját, a dölyf megvetését,
Törvényszegést, gunyolt szerelme kinját,
A hivatalnok gögjét, s mind a sok
rugást, a melylyel a gyalázatos tiporja a
türelmes érdemet:
ha pusztá törrel nyugalmat szerezheth?
Ki görnyedezne nyögve, izzadón,
bus élte jármában, ha rettegésünk
attól, mi a halál után jövend,
- az ismeretlen tartomány, a honnan
egyetlen utas sem tért meg soha, –
nem bénitná meg lelkünk erejét:
hogy inkább tűrjük a jelen gonoszt,
mint elcseréljük olyanért, a mit
nem ismerünk? – E töprengés csínál
belőlünk gyávákat: s e gondolattól
az elszántság természetes színe
betegre sáppad. Így sok nagyszerű,
dicső terv és merész vállalkozás
örökre elveszti a – “tett” nevet,
s a semmiségbe vész.

What is better: being or not being? The question is this:

Does s/he have a greater soul who bears
the scourge, and the trouble/millstone of
bad fate/fortune,
Or s/he who takes (to) arms against his/her
sea of sorrows
And ends it?
To die – to sleep – no more; and if they say
That this dream will then finish all the
many
Pains of the heart, the inborn natural
Suffering of our bodies –
This is an aim that even a saint may desire.
To die – and to sleep: Oh to sleep!
Or perhaps to dream – this is the catch;
As what dream death may bring us
When we have shaken off all (the) worldly
trouble/millstone
Holds us back. This consideration
Gives all suffering a long life.
Otherwise who would bear the blind anger
of his/her fate,
The yoke of the tyrant, the scorn of
haughtiness,
The breaking of law, the trouble of
contempted love,
The superciliousness of office, and all the
many
Kicks by which the
dishonourable/outrageous treads on the
patient merit:
If she can gain peace with a bare dagger?
Who would keep stooping moaning,
sweating
In the yoke of his/her sad life, if our dread
Of what will come after death,
The unknown province from where
Not a single passenger has ever returned
Wouldn't paralysed the strength of our soul:
So that we rather bear the current
wickedness
Than exchange it for something unknown?
This pondering makes us
Cowards: and from this thought
The natural colour of resolution turns pale
and ill.

Thus many great, glorious plans and
courageous ventures
Will lose the name 'deed' for good
And vanish into nothingness.

Telekes

Lét vagy nem lét: ez a kérdéses itt.
Ki a fennköltebb lelke: az, ki tűri
A zsarnok sorsnak száz nyügét, nyilát,
Vagy ki fegyvert fog tenger baja ellen
S végét szakítja dacosan? – Halál –
Alvás, s alvásban, mondják, elpihen
A szív gyötrelme, ősz természetű
Száz testi harcz: oly vég, hogy istenes-
mód'
Óhajtható! – Meghalsz, – elalszol: – alszol!
–

S tán álmodol?! Hajh, ez a bökkenő!
Mert hogy halálunk mily álmokba ejthet,
Ha e halandó terhet mind leráztuk:
Meggondolandó. E tekintet az,
Mely gyötrődőket is oly hosszan éltet.
Hisz ki tűrné a kor gunyját s verését,
Önkény igáját, gög tiprásait,
Únt szerelemnek kínját, pörödázást,
Hatóság dölyfét s mind a sok bosszantást
Melylyel gazság bánt tűrő érdemet, –
Ha békéjét így egy kis törrel is
Megszerezhetné ... Terhét ki czipelné
Izzadva a lét jármán s nyögve, hogyha
A félsz attól, mi a halál után van, –
Az ismeretlen táj, honnét utas még
Nem tért meg, el nem ront ily aratást
S rá nem vesz: inkább tűrni a jelen bajt,
Mint menekülni ösmeretlenekbe.
Töprengés így ejt gyávaságba minket
S természettől jó színű tetterőt
Kórsápadttá így fest meggondolás.
Sok nagyszabásu, szép vállalkozás
Aggályosságtól fékeztetve utján
Elveszti így a tett nevét ...

Being or not being: this is what is
questionable here.
Who is more lofty-souled: s/he who bears
The hundred burdens, arrows of tyrannic
fate
Or s/he who takes arms against his/her sea
of troubles
And defiantly ends it? Death -
Sleep, and in sleep, they say, the torture of
the heart,
A hundred ancient-natured bodily wars
take a rest:
Such an end that can be devoutly/piously
desired.
You die – you fall asleep – you sleep!
Perhaps you dream?! Oh this is the catch!
For it is to be considered into what dreams
death may drop us
When we have shaken off all these mortal
burdens.
This countenance/aspect is
What keeps even sufferers long alive.
Since/for who would bear the derision and
whipping of the age,
The yoke of peremptoriness/wantonness
and all the annoyance
With which roguery hurts the forbearing
merit
If s/he can get his/her peace with a small
dagger?
Who would carry his/her burden
Sweating on the yoke of life and moaning,
The fear from what comes after death –
The unknown countryside/landscape from
which
Traveller has not yet returned, does not
ruin such reaping,
And does not get us to bear the present
trouble
Rather than escape into the unknown.
This is how pondering drops us into
cowardice
And this is how consideration paints
The naturally good-coloured stamina ill-
pale.
Many grand-scale, beautiful ventures thus

Lose the name 'deed' hindered on their way by worry.

Szabó T.

Lenni vagy nem lenni: a kérdés ez itt! Vajon nemesebb-e lélekre nézve tűrni a gyalázatos sors csapásait meg nyilait vagy kart feszíteni a gondtenger ellen s szembe szállva véget vetni neki?

Meghalni: alunni; semmivel se több; álomsegéllyel bevégezni a szív fájdalmaikat s ezer természetes csapást, mely testre örökletes: ez az a vég, mit az ember vágyva vágy. Alunni: talán álmodni; a bökkenő örökké csak ez, mert hogy e halál-alvásban – midőn leráztuk mind e földi bajt, mily álmok jönnek: ez megállni kényszerít! Ez azok, mely oly hosszan élteti a nyomort! Mert ki viselné a kor ostorát s a gúnyt, a zsarnok elnyomást, a dölyfös megvetést, az utált szerelmes kínjait, a pörhalasztást, a hivatal durvaságait s a sok rugást, mit a tűrő érdem méltatlantól szenved, mikor nyugalmát holmi rongyos törrel elnyerhetné? Ki hordaná a terheket nyögve s verejtékezve a megunt élten át, hacsak az iszonyat a halál utáni valamitől – a nem ismert tartomány, melynek határáról utazó vissza nem tér – e vágyunk nem zavarná s el nem szenvedtetné inkább e rosszat, melyben élünk, minthogy máshoz futtatna, miről semmit sem tudunk? Eként az öntudat az, ami mindannyiunkat gyávákká teszen s az elszántság természetes színét így a gondolat halovány sugára sápasztja el, ezzel meg sok nagy s jelentős vállalkozás iránya fonákká ferdül s veszti a „tett,” nevet.

To be or not to be: this is the question here! Is it nobler with regard to the soul to bear the blows and arrows of dreadful fate or to lift an arm against a concern-sea/worry-sea/trouble-sea and by opposing it end it?

To die: to sleep; no more; finish/conclude with the aid of dream the heartaches and the thousand natural blows that are a bodily inheritance. This is an end that a person desirously desires. To sleep: to dream, the catch is always this; because in this sleep of death – when we have shaken off all this worldly trouble – what dreams will come: this forces us to stop! This is the reason that keeps destitution alive so long.

For who would bear the scourge of the age and the derision, the tyrannic domination, the haughty scorn, the tortures of being hated as a lover, the delay of trial, the rudeness of office and many a kick that the forbearing merit suffers from the unworthy, when s/he can gain his/her peace with some tattered dagger? Who would bear the burdens moaning and sweating throughout a boring lifetime, unless the horror of that something after life – the unknown province, from the borders of which no traveller returns – this wouldn't confuse our desire and wouldn't make this badness we live in bearable rather than making us run to another that we know nothing of? Thus it is conscience that makes us all cowards and thus the pale beam of the thought impales the natural colour of resolution and, by this, many big/large-scale/great and significant ventures turn awry/backhand and lose the name 'deed'.

Eörsi's first version

Lenni vagy nem lenni: ez itt a kérdés.
Nemesebb-e lélekben elviselni
A vakszerencse nyügét s nyilait;
Vagy fogjunk fegyvert a tenger baj ellen,
S végezzünk vele? Meghalni – aludni.
Nem több; s egyetlen alvással letudni
A szív keservét, a test eredendő,
Természetes rázkódtatásait:
Ily végért esdünk. Meghalni, aludni,
S talán álmodni: ez a bökkenő;
Mert hogy mily álmok jönnek a halálos
Alvásban ha a földi jajt leráztuk:
Ez visszadöbbszent. E meggondolás az,
Mi a nyomort oly hosszan élteti:
Ki tűrné a kor gúnyát, ostorát,
Zsarnok bosszúját, gőgös ember dölyfét,
Útált szerelem kinját, pör-halasztást,
A hivatalnak packázásait,
S mind a rugást, mellyel méltatlanok
Bántalmazzák a tűrő érdemet:
Ha kiegyenlíthetné tartozását
Egy pusztá törrel? – izzadva ki nyögne,
unott élete terhei alatt,
Ha a halál utáni valami
E fel-nem-fedezett ország, ahonnan,
Nem é tér meg az utazó, le nem igaz,
Hogy inkább tűrjük ismert bajainkat,
S ne fussunk ismeretlenek felé
Igy gyávít el minket az öntudat
S az elszántság természetes színét
A gondolat halványra betegíti;
És szárnyaló, merész vállalkozások
Bágyadnak el miatta, elveszítve
A “tett” nevet.

To be or not to be: this is the question here.
Is it nobler to bear in the soul
The trouble of the arrows of blind fate;
Or shall we take arms against the sea of
troubles,
And end it? To die – to sleep.
No more; and to get rid of the
Sorrow of the heart, the natural, original
shaking/shocks
Of the body in a single sleep.
We are praying/beseeching for such an
end. To die, to sleep,
And perhaps to dream; this is the catch;
As what dreams will come in the deadly
Sleep when we have shaken off the
worldy/earthly trouble,
This baffles us. This consideration is what
Keeps the destitution alive so long:
Who would bear the derision, the scourge
of the age,
The tyrant's revenge, the haughtiness of
the supercilious man,
The trouble of hated love, the delay of
trial,
And all the kicks by which the unworthy
hurt the patient merit,
If s/he could pay his/her dues with a bare
dagger?
Who would moan in sweat under the
burden of his/her boring life,
If that something after death,
This undiscovered country, from where
The traveller does not return, does not
conquer us,
So that we rather bear our known troubles
And not run towards unknown ones.
This is how conscience/consciousness
makes cowards of us
And the thought makes the natural colour
of resolution pale-sick
And winged and lofty courageous ventures
Languish because of this, losing the name
'action/deed'.

Eörsi's most recent version

Lenni vagy nem lenni, ez hát a kérdés:
Nemesebb-e, hogyha eltűri elménk
A vaksors nyilát, parityakövét,
Vagy rontsunk karddal kínok tengerének
S szembeszállva végezzünk velük?
A halál: alvás, nem több; s így levetjük
Testünk ezernyi eredendő kínját,
Öröklött sebét; ilyen pusztulás vonz
Sóváran. A halál: alvás; de alva
Tán álmodunk – itt akad el az ész:
Mert hogy mily álmok jönnek e halálos
Álvásban, ha a föld nyűgét leráztuk,
Ez meg kell bénítson – ez a dilemma
Élteti oly hosszan a kint, hiszen
Ki tűrné a kor gúnyát, ostorát,
Zsarnok önkényét, a dölyfös pimaszt,
A semmibe vett szerelem keservét,
Pör-halasztást, pökhendi hivatalt,
S a fricskákat, miket türelmes érdem
Méltatlan alakoktól szenved el,
Ha kiegyenlíthetné tartozását
Egy kurta késsel? Izzadva ki nyögne
Unott élete terhei alatt,
Ha e halál utáni valami,
E fel nem fedezett ország, ahonnan
Nem tér meg utazó, meg nem zavarna,
Hogy inkább tűrjük ismert bajainkat,
S ne fussunk ismeretlenek felé?
Így gyávít el minket az öntudat,
S az eltökéltség mindig-vörös arcát
Sápadttá gyötri a gondolkodás,
És szárnyaló, merész vállalkozások
Bágyadnak el miatta, elveszítve
A "tett" nevet.

To be or not to be, this is thus/then/now the
question:
is it nobler if our mind bears
the arrow, the slingstone of blind fate,
or shall we attack the sea of tortures
with a sword and by opposing it, end it?
Death is sleep, no more; and thus we take
off
The thousand original tortures and
inherited
wounds of our bodies; such
decay/perishing attracts us.
Death is sleep but in sleep
Perhaps we dream. This is where the mind
is hindered.
As what dreams will come in this deadly
Sleep if we have shaken off the
millstone/burden of the world
This must paralyse us. This is the dilemma
that
Keeps torture alive so long,
for who would bear the derision, the
scourge of the age,
the wantonness of the tyrant, the haughty
unblushing/forward/brazen,
the sorrow of ignored love,
the delay of trial, the insolence of office,
and the annoyance that patient merit
suffers from unworthy figures,
if s/he can pay his/her dues
with a small knife? Who would moan in
sweat under the burdens of a boring life
if this something after death,
this undiscovered country from which
no traveller returns would not confuse us
so that we bear our known sorrows
rather than running toward unknown ones?
This is how consciousness/conscience
makes cowards of us
And thinking torments into pale the ever-
red face of resolution
And lofty, courageous ventures
Languish because of this, losing
The name 'deed'.

Mészöly

Lenni vagy nem lenni – az itt a kérdés.
Úgy nemesebb a lélek, hogyha tűri
ringyó Szerencse nyűgét s nyilait,
vagy ha kiszáll tenger fájdalomra ellen,
s fegyvert ragadva véget vet neki?
Meghalni – elszunnyadni – semmi több.
Egy álom által elvégezni mind
A szív keservét, a test eredendő
természetes rázkódtatásait:
oly cél, amit buzgón kívánhatunk.
Meghalni – elszunnyadni – és aludni...
talán álmodni – ez a bökkenő!
Mert hogy mi álmok jönnek a halálban,
ha majd leráztuk mind e földi bajt,
ez visszadöbbent. E meggondolás az,
mi a nyomort oly hosszan élteti.
Ki tűrné kora gúnyát, ostorát,
zsarnok bosszúját, gőgös ember dölyfét,
utált szerelme kínját, pörhalasztást,
a hivatalnak packázásait,
s mind a rugást, mellyel rongyemberek
gyalázzák meg a tűrő érdemet:
ha nyugalomba küldhetné magát
egy puszta törrel?
Ki tűrné mázsás terhü életét,
izzadva, nyögve gyötrő súly alatt,
ha nem szorongna, hogy mi várja túl
a fölfedetlen tartomány határán,
ahonnan még nem tért meg utazó?
Ez bír rá tűrni a gonosz jelent –
Inkább, mint a jövőendő ismeretlent.
A tudat az, mi gyávává silányít:
az elszántság természetes színét
a gondolat halványra betegíti.
Ily kételytől sok büszke terv kisiklik,
s nem lesz méltó soha e névre: tett.

To be or not to be – that is the question
here.
Is the soul nobler if s/he bears the burden
and arrows of sluttish fate,
or if s/he takes arms against his/her
sea of troubles and end it?
To die – to doze off – no more.
By a dream to end all the
Sorrows of the heart, the original, natural
Shocks of the body
is a goal that we can ardously desire.
To die – to doze off – to sleep...
Perhaps to dream – this is the catch!
For what dreams will come in death
When we have shaken off all of this
worldly trouble,
this hinders us. It is this consideration that
keeps destitution alive so long.
Who would bear the derision, the scourge
of the age,
the tyrant's revenge, the haughtiness of the
supercilious man,
the pain of his/her hated love, the delay of
trial,
the insolence of office,
and all the kicks by which heels hurt the
forbearing merit:
if s/he could send him/herself into death
with a bare dagger?
Who would bear his/her heavy/weighty...
life,
sweating, moaning under its lacerating
weight,
if s/he were not daunted by what will await
him/her
across the borders of the undiscovered
province,
from which no traveller has yet returned?
This brings us to bear the wicked present
Rather than the forthcoming unknown.
It is conscience/consciousness that
degrades us into cowards:
The thought makes the natural colour of
resolution ill-pale.
With so many worries proud plans get
derailed

And will never be worthy of this name:
deed.

Nádasdy

Lenni vagy nem lenni: ez a nagy kérdés;
az-e a nemesebb, ha tűri lelkünk
a pimasz sors minden gonosz nyilát,
vagy az, ha fegyvert fogunk a bajokra,
s véget vetünk nekik? A halál: alvás,
nem több; s ha ezzel megszüntethető
a szívfájdalom, a milljó ütődés,
amit átél a húsunk – ezt a véget
csak kívánni lehet. A halál: alvás;
az alvás: talán álom – itt a baj:
hogymilyen álmok jönnek a halálban,
mikor az élet gubancát leráztuk,
ez meggondolkodtat – ezért van az,
hogym hosszú életű a szenvedés.
Mert ki tűrné a sok szégyent, csapást,
zsarnokságot és nagyképűsködést,
lenézett szerelmet, kijátszott törvényt,
a vezetők arcátlanságait,
a csendes embert érő száz rugást,
ha nyugalma megadhatná magának
egy pusztapengével? Vinnénk-e terhet
izzadva, nyögve egy életen át,
ha nem félnénk, hogym mi lesz azután,
az ismeretlen országban, ahonnan
még nem tért meg utas – ez visszatart;
inkább az ismert rosszat tűrjük el,
mint hogym fussunk a nem-ismert felé.
A lelkiismeret így kényszerít
mindenkit gyávaságra; így lohasztja
az akarat természetes színét
sápadt-betegre a meggondolás;
a nagyravágyó, szép vállalkozások
így futnak zsákutcába, csúfot űzve
a „cselekvés” nevéből.

To be or not to be: this is the great
question;
is it nobler if our soul bears
all the wicked arrows of brazen fate,
or if we take arms against the troubles
and end them? Sleep is a dream,
no more; and if the heartache, the million
shocks
our flesh lives through can be ceased –
this end can only be desired.
Death is sleep; sleep is perhaps a dream –
here is the trouble/matter:
What dreams will come in death
When we have shaken off the tangle of
life,
this makes us think – this is why
suffering is long-lived.
For we should bear many shames, blows,
tyranny and swollen-headedness,
despised love, double-crossed/overreached
law,
the cheek(iness) of leaders,
the hundred kicks the quiet person gets,
if s/he could give him/herself his/her
peace
by a bare razor? Would we carry a
burden sweating, moaning throughout a
lifetime
were we not afraid of what will be
afterwards,
in the unknown country from which
no passenger has yet returned – this holds
me/us back;
we rather bear the known/familiar badness
than run toward the unknown.
This is how conscience forces us all into
Cowardice; this is how consideration
Languishes the natural colour of will pale-
ill;
this is how the ambitious, beautiful
ventures
run into a dead end, making a mockery
of the name ‘action’.

Jánosházy

Lenni vagy nem lenni: ez itt a kérdés.
Mi nemesebb: eltűnni a duhaj
Szerencse zaklatását s nyilait,
Vagy fegyvert fogni, hogy már érne
véget
Tenger bajunk? Meghalni, elaludni...
Csak ennyi – s egy álommal befejezni
A szív kínját, a test örökletes
Sok nyavalyáját... ó, ily vég fölöttébb
Kívánatos! Meghalni, elaludni.
Talán álmodni. Ez a bökkenő,
Mert hogy mily álmok jönnek a
halálban,
Ha földi gondjainkat elvetettük,
Visszariaszt a tettől. Ez a kétely,
Ez nyújtja balsorsunk oly hosszúra:
Ki tűrne gúnyt, ostorcsapást a kortól,
Zsarnoki önkényt, gőg pimaszkodását,
Szerelmi kint, jogi huzavonát,
A hivatalnak packázásait,
A rúgást, mit hitványtól kap az érdem,
Ha megadhatná az örök nyugalmat
Egy pusztá tör? Ki vinne ennyi terhet,
Izzadna, nyögne ennyi súly alatt,
Ha nem rettegne, hogy mi vár reá
Ott túl, az ismeretlen tartományban,
Honnan nem tért még vissza utazó?
Ezért tűrjük az ismert rosszat inkább,
Mintsem vállaljuk, mit nem ismerünk.
Az öntudat farag gyávát belőlünk,
Az elszántság természetes színét
A gondolat halványra betegíti;
Sok nagyszerű, lelkes vállalkozás
Letért útvjáról e kétely miatt,
S nem érdemes nevére sem.

To be or not to be: this is the question here.
What is nobler: to bear the pestering and
arrows of hedonistic fortune
Or to take arms so that our seaful
Of troubles may end at last? To die, to fall
asleep ...No more – and to end with a dream
The torture of the heart, the many hereditary
Maladies of the body... oh such an end is
most Desirable! To die, to fall asleep.
Perhaps to dream. This is the catch,
For what dreams will come in death,
when we have thrown away our earthly
troubles,
this scares us/me from the deed. It is this
doubt
that makes our bad fate/misfortune so
long/prolongs/lengthens:
Who would bear derision and scourges from
the age,
Tyrannical autocracy, the insolence of
haughtiness,
Love-related torture, delay with legal issues,
The insolence of office,
The kick that merit receives from the
unworthy,
If a bare dagger could give
eternal rest? Who would carry so much
burden,
who would sweat and moan under so much
weight
Unless they are frightened of what awaits
them
Across there, in the unknown province
From which no traveller has yet returned?
This is why we rather bear the familiar bad
Than taking on what we don't know.
It is conscience that sculpts cowards of us,
Thought sickens pale
The natural colour of resolution;
Many great, eager ventures
Got off their way due to this doubt,
and they don't even deserve their names.

Appendix Four

Nyomtattatni, vagy nem nyomtattatni, ez már most a nagy kérdés! Mi jobb? eltemetni az Íróasztal' fiókjába a' néki dühödött fantazia' furcsa szökéseit 's fatyjait, vagy sajtó alá tétetni a' czifra betűkkel tisztán leirt munkát, 's közre-bocsátásával levenni róla kezünket. Nyomtattatni – gyanakodni – egyebet semmit sem, 's az első felvonásnál azt mondhatni: vége a' főjfájásnak, 's az írásba -örültség ezer természetes kízásainak. Hisz' ez olyan cél, mellyet forróan kell ohajtanunk. Nyomtattatni –lefényleni azon deszkáról, mellyen Pope aranyozott bornyúbőr kötésben áll – alumni talám Quarlessel)? Itt, a' bog. Mert mellyik classzisba számlálnak bennünket, ha már egyszer valamelly tárgyat egybe-zagyváltunk, ez méltán tartóztathat. Az ettől való rettegés teszi hogy a' nyughatlankodó Költő, egészen kilencz esztendeig türje-el verseinek *csak írásban* léteket. Mert ki állhatná-ki különben a'hírszomj békételen gyűjtogatásait, a' magát bízató érdem' büszkeségét, és mindenek felett, barátainknak nyomtatásra készítő alkalmatlankodásaikat, ha mind ezeknek elhárítása csak egy *imprimatur* megnyerésében áll, mellyet minden éretlen munka legkönnyebben megnyerhet. Ki viselné-el a' sok bajokat, mellyekkel az Író küszködik; ki sohajtana izzadna az' elme' hánykolódásai miatt? De a' Parnassz sikámló hegye, mellynek örökké zöld laurusával csak kevesen tértek vissza, megzavarja az akaratot, 's arra bír bennünket, hogy életünket inkább hír nélkül töltsük-el, mint szerencsét keresve megjelenjünk a' Publicum előtt, megszentetziáztassunk. Így tesz a' Kritika nyúlszívüekké. És ennek köszönheti a' moly, már néhány, néhai elrongyolott, mefüstösödött kéziratot, ez produkál a' fekete tentából vereset. Ez, hűt-ki némelly neki bolondúlt, 's magát elszánt Könyv-fabrikánst, 's kiveri fejéből az Írói névvel való fantazírozást.

[To be published, or not to be published, this is the great question now!. What is better? To bury in the drawer of the desk the strange leaps and bastards of the fuming/furious... imagination, or to send to/under/in press the work neatly copied out in decorative letters, and by its dissemination, take our hands off it/let them go. To be published – to have suspicions – nothing else, and to be able to say at the first act: the headache and the thousand natural tortures of the madness of writing are over. For this is such an aim that we have to arduously desire. To be published – to shine down/from/off the boards on which Pope stands on golden leather binding – to sleep perhaps with Qarles? Here is the knot. For in what class they may count us once we have put together a subject – this may rightly pause us. It is the dread of this that achieves that the restless Poet bears for nine years his/her poems being only in manuscript. For who would otherwise bear the turbulent lighting... of reputation, the pride of self-encouraging merit, and above all, our friends' importunity urging us to publish, if parrying all this can be done only by gaining an *imprimatur*, which any unripe work can most easily achieve. Who would bear those many troubles the writer struggles with; who would sigh and sweat because of the tossing/flouncing of the mind? Yet the slippery mountain of Parnassus, with the green laurels of which only a few have returned, confuses the will, and gets us to spend our lives without fame rather than appear in front of the public chasing our luck, and get reprimanded. This is how criticism makes us faint-hearts. And this is what the moth can thank for a few old, ragged and smoky manuscripts; this is what produces red ink from black ink. This is what makes a few passionate, resolute book-makers lose interest, and gets fantasising about reputation as a writer out of their heads.] (1817)

Berlioz

To be, or not to be, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer wretched operas, ridiculous concerts, mediocre virtuosos, crazed composers ... or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them? To die, to sleep—no more. And by a sleep to say we end the torture of our ears, the suffering of the heart and mind, and the thousand natural shocks that the exercise of criticism imposes upon our intelligence and common sense. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—to sleep, perchance to have a nightmare—aye, there's the rub. For in that sleep of death what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil; what mad theories will we have to entertain, what discordant scores will we have to hear, what imbeciles will we have to praise, what outrages will we see inflicted upon masterpieces, what absurdities will we hear pronounced, what windmills will we see taken for giants? (Schmidgall 1990, p. 313)

Prince Charles's speech presenting the Thomas Cranmer Schools Prize (December 1989)

Well, frankly the problem as I see it at this moment in time is whether I should just lie down under all this hassle and let them walk all over me, or whether I should just say OK, I get the message, and do myself in. I mean, let's face it, I'm in a no-win situation, and quite honestly, I'm so stuffed up to here with the whole stupid mess that I can tell you I've just got a good mind to take the quick way out. That's the bottom line. The only problem is, what happens if I find that when I've bumped myself off there's some kind of a, you know, all that mystical stuff about when you die, you might find you're still-know what I mean? (cited Lanier 2002, p. 56)

Appendix Five

Year	Theatre	Director
1962	Ódry Színpad, then Vígszínház	Ferenc Hont
1962	Kaposvár	Ferenc Hont
1962	Békés Megyei Jókai Színház	Lajos Máté
1962	Egri Gárdonyi Géza Színház	György Nagy
1962	Győri Kisfaludy Színház	Mária Angyal
1962	Pécsi Nemzeti Színház	Ferenc Hont
1962	Miskolci Nemzeti Színház	Nyilasssy Judit
1962	Debreceni Csokonai Színház	Károly Szász
1963	Szeged	László Hegedüs
1964	Szolnok	Gábor Mádi Szabó

Appendix Six

An interview with István Eörsi about translation

Márta Minier: How did you get involved with the theatre?

István Eörsi: I had wanted to get involved with the theatre for a long time, but my prison record did not permit it. In the beginning I only wrote poetry, then I got interested in journalism, essays, short stories. Only after all these did I try my hand at drama. I wrote my first play in 1964. It was staged in autumn 2002 in the form of a one-act opera, with a score by Gyula Fekete, under the title *A megmentett város (The Rescued City)*. My old wish to work in the theatre came true in 1977, when László Babarczy took over the management of the Kaposvár theatre, one of the most exciting venues during the socialist period. I have written about twenty plays, many of which have never been performed. Two or three of them have only been staged in Germany, some of them under my direction.

MM: Were these translated by Germans?

IE: Yes, they were, and I checked the translations. My play entitled *Kihallgatás (The Hearing)* has been performed in five theatres, including Hamburg. In Hungary my work had not been staged for four or five years before *The Rescued City*.

MM: Have you been working as a director in Hungary too?

IE: Yes, I directed *Sírkő és kakaó (Tombstone and Cocoa)* in Asbóth Street. I am not a director by trade, and, perhaps for this reason, I am not a bad director.

MM: How did you begin translating Shakespeare?

IE: I was living in Berlin when Tamás Ascher was pondering over the idea of staging *Hamlet* with Gábor Máté in the lead role. For political reasons,

on order from above, I had already been barred from the Hungarian theatre, but this did not put an end either to my friendships or to my network of contacts. Ascher invited me to do *Hamlet* with him. He could not use Arany's translation with Máté, because he had a more modern performance in mind than Arany's version would have allowed. I knew that Hamlet was going to wear jeans, and I was supposed to prepare a modern day text in accordance. Not a "beat" text of Shakespeare, but something more like what Shakespeare's text would have been in its own time. When I took up the job, I decided to try and preserve whatever was unsurpassable in Arany's text. I got a loosely typed copy of Arany's text from the theatre, and I wrote my corrections on the line above. Of course I didn't alter everything. The result was a catastrophe. Arany's translation is so much a part of our national heritage that the more educated members of the audience knew it very well, if not by heart. Familiar sentences ended up sounding very strange, or vice versa: an unfamiliar beginning would turn into a well-known phrase. Géza Fodor, the celebrated dramaturg, said it was not the characters fighting against each another but the two texts. I had to face the failure of this technique. A huge scandal erupted as a result of it. I was accused by many of betraying my country, since in a country where you cannot fight for true national causes people make political issues out of literary texts. I was portrayed as someone who had desecrated a cultural treasure, and was therefore guilty of perpetrating an anti-Hungarian deed. First Balázs Vargha, then György Somlyó attacked me furiously in the press. They blamed the whole venture on me, but Géza Fodor criticised only the translation strategy. Personally, I am proud of beginning the

process of retranslating the classics – Dezső Mészöly and Ádám Nádasy were not accused of treason later on.

MM: How did your second translation of *Hamlet* happen?

IE: I decided to do it again. In this new version I borrowed very little from Arany, with the exception of the occasional line, such as his rendering of “Frailty, thy name is woman”, because it is pointless to replace *gyarlóság* (‘fallibility’) with another noun which would probably not be so apt. If something has been absorbed into our national culture, especially if a phrase has been turned into a saying, it can only be justifiable to change it if there is some meaningful reason to do so. For example, I changed “Kizökkent az idő” (“Time has been derailed”) – Arany’s version of “The time is out of joint”. I did some philological research and discovered that Shakespeare was using an image from everyday life here. Arany’s *kizökkent* (derailed, dislocated) is beautiful, but I thought the notion of spraining is better suited to this context, making the line even more heart-rending and humane. *Kizökkent* does not ache, *kibicsaklott* (sprained) does. I diverged from Arany here despite the fact that his version has found its way into everyday speech. I couldn’t find a better version of a number of word-plays either, but overall I retranslated the play. I kept checking Schlegel’s translation as I did so; my German is better than my English – this is a point both Arany and I have in common. He also spoke better German than English, and referred back to Schlegel. Where Schlegel misunderstood something, there is a mistranslation in Arany too. I also realised that, despite a renewed interest in Shakespeare, the 19th century is a long way in spirit from the Renaissance with its hypocritical attitude to physicality and passion. (There are a few exceptions, but Arany is not

among them.) There are linguistic factors which contribute to a translation becoming archaic more rapidly than 'works of literature'. Shying away from the sensual is even truer for Arany's translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where he finds refuge in the archaic perfective tense whenever he has to translate the fury of the two young couples. Arany (inescapably) reduces a very important aspect of the play, if he does not reduce it completely. The life of the court restricts the characters' instincts, confining their utterances and actions within certain boundaries, then those overflow the boundaries. I mean more than the importance of trying to translate Freudian puns and other *risqué* or mischevious utterances correctly; the point is that the attitude to the world is different to that of Arany's translation. I would like to see this translation of mine on stage. They were doing my *Hamlet* in Nyíregyháza, at least 90 % of it was my text. István Verebes directed it, without my consent. They borrowed from Arany too, and Verebes wrote a bit into it. He rewrote the gravediggers' scene, though I bet Shakespeare's is better. I wish Ascher would direct this translation too, but he cannot find a potential Hamlet today.

MM: It is very interesting how important it is that one has to think in terms of actors.

IE: If one is not a theatre practitioner, it is not immediately apparent that a play can be revived, even if it is not topical either for political or intellectual reasons, just because of an excellent actor. A long time ago, the practice of benefit performances had a similar role, and in those cases the rewarded actor could keep the income too.

MM: Who commissioned your other Shakespeare translations and when?

IE: When I was in Berlin in 1988, János Ács asked me to translate *Othello*. He could not use László Kardos's translation for the performance. This is not a bad translation, only you are left with the impression that there is something lacking. *Coriolanus* was commissioned by Gábor Székely; *The Tempest* by Gyula Gazdag in 1985; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also by Ács in 1985. All of them were commissioned for performance. I have made two versions of *Coriolanus*, both requested by Székely, the first one in the early seventies, and then I retranslated it in 1985 in Berlin. Gazdag is a great director, we worked together a lot, for example on *Candide*, but *The Tempest* wasn't a success. That can happen. Even if everyone involved is talented, and the actors are good, still it doesn't necessarily work out.

MM: What source texts did you use?

IE: Beside the New Arden, which is an excellent edition, I used a bilingual (English and German) Schlegel and a very well annotated edition prepared for secondary school students. Libraries in Berlin are very good, so if I wanted to look up something, I could check out five or six editions. I do not have problems understanding the text, only problems of deciding which interpretation to choose.

MM: And how did you decide?

IE: It has been different from case to case. How can one divide syntactically the following quotation from the great soliloquy. "Whether 'tis nobler / in the mind to suffer" or "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind / to suffer". My first translation goes "Nemesebb-e lélekben elviselni" ("Is it a nobler attitude to suffer in the soul...") I followed up this interpretation consciously in the spirit of the whole play. The point is not whether the

soul is nobler or not, but what to do: to bear the pain, or to fight against it. At other times, when I couldn't choose between the different interpretations, I picked the one which worked better in practical terms, the one I could draft better. If I accept that the gravediggers's scene is a piece of clownery, I will always choose the option which emphasises this aspect. The emphasis here is not on gravedigging but on fury.

MM: And what did you do about omissions?

IE: It depended on the spur of the moment whether I dropped one adjective in three or used some kind of contraction. This is the chief practical difficulty in translating from English in general, not only with Shakespeare. When it comes to translating sonnets by Keats, for instance, you have to stick to the fourteen lines. This is even more difficult for German translators, because German has longer sentences.

MM: Did you encounter any cultural references that didn't work in Hungarian, and which you were forced to change into Hungarian cultural allusions?

IE: Yes, that happened a few times. I was dramaturg at the Kaposvár theatre when I was revising István Vas's translation of *Richard III* 'illegal' (which means it was not attributed to me). Metaphors connected to hunting were problematic – such as the falcon when someone releases it and the bird returns to him. This could become a metaphor of love. It is all described in maddening detail, so I was not able to replace a *falcon* with a *bait*. I could not use fishing imagery, since hunters belonged to a different 'social class'. At the beginning of *Hamlet* there is a similar problem when the question is posed, "Say, what, is Horatio there?" (My translation would read "And is this Horatio here?") And Horatio, holding

out his hand, replies “A piece of him”. (My translation – “Csak egy darabja”– would read "Only a piece of him.") You need a strong theatrical imagination in order to understand a humorous beginning: it is pitch black on the stage. It must be clear from the conversation of the two speakers that one of them does not see the other at all but feels part of him, his hand. If I had to choose between the grotesque and the non-grotesque I always chose the former. I was sure that there is less room for error this way. *Hamlet* is a very intellectual play yet also folklore, a folk play.

MM: Did contemporary Shakespeare translations help you?

IE: After completing my translation of *Hamlet*, I had a look at Erich Fried’s translation but I only used Schlegel’s during the translation process. In Germany they prepare a new translation for almost every performance. The best theatre experience of my life was Zadek’s *Othello*, which I saw in Belgrade. He used Fried too, but essentially he translated it in prose. Translating in prose is very fashionable in Germany at the moment. I don’t agree with this completely, at least I wouldn’t do it myself. Poems help us rise above everyday life, this is part of Shakespeare’s allure. On the other hand, translating in verse needs discipline on the translator’s part.

MM: When translating, did you think about what sort of staging would fit your translation? Or did this work the other way round: the director had a manner of staging in mind, and he requested a text in line with this. Does a certain style of translation go with a certain style of directing?

IE: I don’t think every performance requires a new translation, but if a director treats historical realia seriously, a rather classical, lofty language is more suitable. If a director is interested in human beings, in ‘everyman’ who doesn’t know how to ascertain the truth (in other words, if he is

interested in metaphysical problems), the language should be more modern. I saw Brook's *Hamlet* with an African-American actor in the leading role. There was hardly any setting and only the most indispensable costume. In a sense it was a return to the Globe, where there was no lighting and setting in the current sense. I am a great devotee of this form of theatre, not so much as a translator but as a lover of theatre. These days the ostentation of the setting almost restricts the acting itself. I think Shakespeare is about the naked man. By this I mean that the inner man is revealed as unhidden as possible. My only memory of Botho Strauss's *The Tour Guide* in Berlin (I think it was directed by the excellent Luc Bondy, with Bruno Ganz and Corinna Kirchhof in the lead roles) is that a little cottage was moved to and fro on the stage. I love moving actors but I'm not interested in moving cottages. To sum up, I'm sure whether a production will be modern or traditional is clearly at the back of the director's mind. Although I don't translate on the basis of the setting, and the set designer does not necessarily do his job on the basis of a text, we both rely on the director's vision of the performance.

MM: How often did tradition and the canon influence your Shakespearean translations?

IE: Apart from my work as a dramaturg, I revised someone else's translation only once, and that was Arany's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This text is not part of the Hungarian national heritage to the same extent as *Hamlet*. I left the scenes of the tradesmen more or less untouched because they are perfect in Hungarian, and they were originally written in a more archaic English than the rest of the play. I adjusted tenses, whatever else was necessary, but I left about 90% of these scenes as they were,

though I revised about 80% of the rest of the play. I retranslated *Coriolanus*, which had only been translated by the great Petőfi before, *The Tempest*, which had been done by the great Babits – these are retranslations from scratch.

MM: Did you struggle against your great predecessors?

IE: Babits's translation is wonderful in literary terms, but he was not interested in the theatre. I have to admit that I find my translation of *The Tempest* very good, from a theatrical perspective. Hungarian Shakespeare translators have been very fortunate that Vörösmarty's poem entitled "Gondolatok a könyvtárban" ("Thoughts in the Library") has worked out the sound of Shakespearean iambs in Hungarian for us. The fact that we have a chance to translate Shakespeare is due to Vörösmarty and Arany. In this sense I respect tradition and I don't forget about my 'debts'.

MM: Were there any other formative theatrical, literary or other artistic experiences that left a trace on your translations?

IE: A great Shakespeare experience of mine was Brook's visiting performance of *King Lear* in Hungary. With guys in leather costume jumping onto the stage, the performance offered some brutal reality instead of an 'airy', poetic Shakespeare. Another decisive influence was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I saw it for the first time in my life that all the characters were on stage at the same time and act as a primary audience, as a chorus. Apart from these productions, it was the Hungarian theatre that taught me that a dramatic translation is not supposed to be literary. It needs to be poetic but not literary. It needs to be poetic in a dramatic way. One is not supposed to hunt down lofty words. "To be or not to be ..." is a most prosaic sentence. My main criticism of Arany's translation, apart from that

he lessened the erotic implications, is that in his translation even the predominantly informative lines are incredibly poetic. Shakespeare's drama uses forceful everyday language to a great extent. This shouldn't be turned into some form of poetic concoction.

MM: Is translation as a way of creating, as a means of artistic self-expression, important to you?

IE: It happens very rarely that a translator wants to express something in a translation as a creative writer. There are examples, especially in poems, for instance in my translations of Heine and Brecht from the Kádár period. Translating *The Death of Danton* in the Horthy period (this, oddly enough, was done by the apolitical Kosztolányi) might have some political message. However, in most cases my main consideration is the theatres that commission me to translate a play. I have never said no to Shakespeare or Brecht. I don't speak French, but if I did, I wouldn't say no to Molière either.

MM: You mentioned Brecht. How does Brecht come across on the Hungarian stage?

IE: Brecht has gained considerable popularity in recent years, yet there are very few performances in the Brecht tradition. The sort of intellectual wryness and technique of alienation that you associate with Brecht does not work easily with audiences brought up on popular theatre and realistic acting styles. There is not a single Brecht production that has grabbed my attention in Hungary so far. However, there is a salutary lesson to be learned from this renewal of interest in Brecht after such a long period of resistance.

22 March 2002

Appendix Seven

**An interview with Dezső Mészöly on the subject of
literary and stage translation**

Márta Minier: What inspired you to become a translator of Shakespeare?

Dezső Mészöly: When, in 1943, Budapest suffered devastating bombing, especially the industrial districts of Pest, I went to my maternal grandfather's estate in the provincial small town of Kunszentmiklós. He was a judge of the district court, and I took Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* with me, intent on translating it. The reason for my choice is interesting. My cousin, Balázs Vargha, who – though he was the 19th-century translator Károly Szász's grandson found his grandfather's style, especially the style of his translations, a bit artificial – showed me Szász's translation of this play.¹ My cousin was upset by Szász's translation of the scene in which Cleopatra, in a jealous rage, almost has the poor messenger scourged when he breaks the news of Antony's second wedding in Rome to her. This is not only an excellent depiction of female hysteria but also a very poetic one. However, Károly Szász's translation lacks the natural air of living language, which the representation of hysteria would require here. Shakespeare presents Cleopatra in this scene in the way a modern dramatist would present hysteria. We read this play together many times, and when Balázs was abroad on a grant, I went to Kunszentmiklós with the idea of translating the tragedy into the language which people use now. I had no commission whatsoever for this. I kept sending extracts to Balázs, and he sent back his comments on postcards. This correspondance had the enthusiasm of Kazinczy's time.² After a while I thought I should show it to the dramaturg at the Hungarian National Theatre, who was László Szűcs at that time, a prominent expert, who could have been my father

¹ Balázs Vargha: literary historian, one of his main areas of expertise was nineteenth-century Hungarian literature.

² Ferenc Kazinczy, the chief organiser of Hungarian literary life during the Enlightenment has about twenty-four volumes of (edited) correspondance.

on account of his age.³ I gave him an extract from my translation, then I went back to the countryside to continue with it. I soon received a letter from László Szűcs saying ‘Dear friend, your translation astonished me. I’m willing to ask for a contract and an advance payment from Tóni Németh’. This was the greatest honour for me, since Antal Németh, the famous manager of the National was not Tóni⁴ for me at the time; not someone I would have spoken of in such familiar terms. I was incredibly happy, and my family were proud of me. If memory serves me right, I received 1,000 pengős⁵ in advance, which was a really large amount at that time. By the time I finished the translation, Hungary had been in ruins. Szálasi took over instead of Horthy. When I surfaced from the air-raid shelter, I took the text to the new National Theatre, where Tamás Major was the new manager, but Mr Szűcs was still dramaturg there.⁶ He took the translation to Major, who was a very good reader of plays, but he only read the plays he wanted to direct. My translation of *Antony and Cleopatra* only came to the fore when they were seeking a play for Gizi Bajor⁷. She had not acted at the new National Theatre, the ‘Theatre of the Liberation’ yet. Major, among others, was stalking her with great reverence. Gizi Bajor was sent four plays so that she could make her choice for her great return. One of the plays was *Lyubov Yarovaya* by Trenyov, a Soviet play about a primary school teacher, who, to her misfortune, falls in love with a ‘white’ officer – the play has a lot of civil war stuff and the like. Bajor didn’t want it, later Hilda Gobbi⁸ had a great success with it. Bajor was also offered a Soviet stage adaptation of *Anna Karenina*, which she did much later, but at that time she was not interested in it; she said the novel was better. Then she was sent *Bold Heroes*, a propaganda play by a communist writer. The fourth play she was offered was my Shakespeare translation. It was a strange decision on Major’s part to send it, because Gizi Bajor usually acted in conversational plays rather than Shakespearean ones. She had had only one leading Shakespeare role in her career. This was Juliet, when she

³ László István Szűcs (1901-1976): dramaturg, the playwright Margit Gáspár’s husband.

⁴ Tóni: his nickname.

⁵ Pengő: Hungarian currency in use at the time discussed here.

⁶ Tamás Major (1910-1986): outstanding actor, director and theatre manager of a socialist persuasion.

⁷ Gizi Bajor (1893-1951) prominent actress.

was a trainee actress of seventeen years. I need to add in haste that what she really wanted was to return to the National with *The Lady of the Camellias*. This was impossible, because the devoted communist Tamás Major got agitated even by hearing the title of this play, claiming that it stank of the scented bedpan and boudoir, not to mention a coughing high-class prostitute. Eventually, Bajor wanted to do Cleopatra, and in this very translation. She was surprised that a classical Shakespeare play could be voiced in contemporary idiom. She acted it lightly as if it were a conversational play. So, *Antony and Cleopatra* was staged in Hungary in 1946, during the period of the coalition.

MM: What was it like to work around Gizi Bajor? What memories have you got of her?

DM: I've got a very dear memory of her. Bajor had a very good sense of humour on stage as well as off it. She was around fifty when she acted Cleopatra, yet she gave the impression of a young and slender woman. With a good costume designer, she could still play the role of a thirty-year-old woman. Cleopatra's age is not even mentioned in the text as the sequence of events of a few years is crammed into it. Thus, the actress is supposed to pass as a woman in her thirties. At that time I was an assistant director at the National. This was due to my translation of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and to the fact that I joined the trade union and passed an exam in acting. I got a degree which enabled me to work as a supply actor. Major employed me as a supply actor and assistant director. I bought a beautiful fur coat from my first salary and from the royalties I received for my translation. When Gizi Bajor saw my coat, she asked, 'Did I buy (you) that?' I understood her humour, I bowed, and said, 'Yes, madam, thank you'. And then she pointed at me and said, 'Look, what a pimp I have...'

MM: Were the rest of your Shakespeare translations all commissioned?

DM: Yes, they were, with the exception of *Measure for Measure*, which I translated from personal interest in Kunszentmiklós, on my grandfather's estate. This was also staged in a couple of theatres later on.

MM: What source texts did you use?

⁸ Hilda Gobbi (1913-1988) was a prominent actress and a devoted socialist.

DM: I used amply annotated editions, especially the *Arden*, which made my job much easier. I tend to think that it is much more difficult to translate a modern English play than a classical one. A classical play is presented with a variety of explanations – it is up to you which interpretation to choose. When it comes to a contemporary English play, one keeps coming across phrases that are not even in the dictionary, because the English language changes incredibly quickly, and there is no great distance between English literary language and everyday usage. I have rarely translated contemporary English plays, but when I have, I always had to consult the English wife of my friend Imre Szász, who explained many expressions to me. This occurred, for instance, when I was translating *Bingo*, Edward Bond's play on Shakespeare. *Bingo* didn't really mean anything in Hungary at that time, and, having been lectured on the bingo craze by Mrs Szász, I followed my son Gergely's advice and entitled the Hungarian translation *Fej vagy írás* [Heads or Tails].

MM: Did you check the already extant Hungarian translations of the Shakespeare plays you translated?

DM: Not systematically. I had already known most of these, and I only took up translating plays when I was not satisfied with the translation(s). Dissatisfaction is the greatest inspiration a literary translator can have. I often felt that some of my predecessors' translations were uncomfortable on the stage. My main principle in translation matters, which is not something I understood from the outset but discovered from a long career in translation, is that the most important thing is to recognise the author's intention. If Shakespeare's intention was that the play would have an immediate effect right on the spot, then the translator cannot make excuses for his/her work by saying the original is too dense or murky. There is no doubt that the text worked very well for audiences in Shakespeare's time. Just like a good pistol. Shakespeare's authorial intention is clear, he didn't even bother to publish the plays – he meant them for the stage. The first editions, which were pirate editions, appeared without his knowledge or consent. The fact that Shakespeare's dramatic *oeuvre* more or less survived is due to the Folio edition after his death, the *spiritus rector* for which was not himself but two fellow

actors who realised that they could make money that way. It is interesting that some of his contemporaries, such as Webster or Fletcher, were indeed concerned with publishing their work. Shakespeare was utterly indifferent to this, he only wanted people to buy the tickets. It is only ourselves, contemporary spectators, for whom these texts seem to be too rich for the theatre. My *ars poetica* in translation is that the first and foremost thing is to find and translate the authorial intention. I am not supposed to leave a single passage in my work that does not work on the live stage.

MM: Do you imagine the staging, the mise en scène, when you translate a play?

DM: Not only do I imagine it, but I act it out too. In my younger days I wanted to become an actor, among other things. In 1946, in the actors' trade union there was a course that recruited students who were not admitted to the proper actor training college for political reasons (because of their origins, social class, and so on). I would have been admitted to the actor training college but I was doing another university course. In the entrance exam for this trade union school I was asked who my tutor was. The excellent actor Jenő Törzs died just about that time, and I lied that I was his disciple.⁹ It was not a complete lie; I did indeed learn from him, not as his student, but as a spectator - from the way he acted. Of course, I did it in a different way. His last role - a melancholic one with a fine sense of humour - was Chekhov's one-man show entitled *The Harmfulness of Smoking Tobacco* - this is what I learnt for my entrance exam. I successfully passed this course. On my certificate it says 'exempt from working in provincial areas'; this referred to the practice that those who had poorer marks had to go outside Budapest to work for two years, before having a chance to be employed in the capital. Since I escaped this obligation, I went straight to the National Theatre for an interview. I did the same Chekhov performance again there, and Major, the theatre manager really liked it. He learnt that I was the very same person whose translation was lying on the desk of the dramaturg. This is the time when he employed me as a supply actor

⁹ Jenő Törzs (1887-1946) was an outstanding actor of many stage productions and films. His stage roles included the titular role of *Hamlet*.

(someone just above an extra in the hierarchy) and assistant director. Yet I didn't become either an actor or a director, but a dramaturg, and have been a Shakespeare translator up to now. When translating I always imagine that I have to act out each passage, including the women's parts, as an actor. For instance, when Othello talks about Desdemona and their love, Shakespeare's text is as follows, "Her father loved me, oft invited me..." Károly Szász translated this in the following way. "Atyja, szeretvén, gyakran hítt magához...."[Her father, having loved me, often invited me to his home.] There is no need for the participium here: 'having loved me' is unnecessary. Szász reckoned this was literary, but I didn't like it; I chose another track

MM: Did you actually act any Shakespearean roles on the stage?

DM: I only acted in a single Shakespeare play. I did Marquess of Dorset in *Richard III*. Once in my days as a supply actor I had to stand in for my friend, Jóska Szendrő, who fell ill. There was a scene in which Dorset lay his head on his mother's lap. Anna Tőkés, an actress of enormous talent, played the role of the mother. She wasn't told that I was going to be playing opposite her instead of Jóska. This very professional actress almost broke down in surprise.

MM: Whose translation was this?

DM: I was speaking István Vas's words.

MM: One shouldn't overlook that you not only translate Shakespeare but you also write essays related to his work.

DM: How I became a Shakespeare scholar is another matter. On a couple of occasions it was evident that my work had been misunderstood, or I was attacked out of envy or malice because I had the courage to translate plays that had already been translated by the big names. These attacks forced me to defend myself, and that is how I became an essayist. I always had some subjective reason for translation, for instance, seeing a play differently from how Babits or Kosztolányi did. Babits in his book on European literary history (*Az európai irodalom története*) claims that Shakespeare is not for the stage. Commenting on Tolstoy's anti-Shakespeare pamphlet, he asserts that if Tolstoy has Shakespeare on the stage in mind, then he is right. This is because Babits didn't like Shakespeare performances. He was mistaken

about Shakespeare on the stage because he saw so many poor performances in Budapest. I also recall a number of disappointing performances from my youth.

MM: What was the problem with them?

DM: It is difficult to grasp but it was usually something to do with directors reorganising, regrouping the scenes. A concrete problematic case was when the prominent actor Tivadar Uray, then in his forties, was given the role of Hamlet. Now, we are told Hamlet's age in the play; we know he is thirty. In addition to this, he cannot be cast as older than that because his mother is a woman for whom one of the characters has committed murder. One can imagine that a thirty-year-old Hamlet has a forty-seven year old mother. A woman of that age can still be beautiful!

MM: Did you come across Shakespeare translations in other languages during the course of your work?

DM: Yes, I have read Shakespeare in German and French. I didn't really like them, and I think I can say they did not really have an impact on me. I found Shakespeare too rhetorical in German, and too prosaic in French. I saw André Gide's *Hamlet* in Paris in 1947. It was very interesting, but it was in prose.

MM: Have any other works, including those in other art forms, had an impact on your Shakespeare translations?

DM: I had lively memories of Laurence Olivier's film *Hamlet*. Olivier took liberties with the text, but that can be justified because cinema has different requirements to the theatre. In a film the visual images can express many things that are otherwise expressed verbally in a play. Olivier had every right to condense or shorten the text, and relocate scenes – these are all justified in the cinema.

MM: And what if all this happens on the stage?

DM: Shortening a performance text might not be a sacrilege. The extant Shakespeare texts also retain traces of Shakespeare having cut some passages. For instance, *Timon of Athens* and *The Tempest* have a number of incomplete lines; these are signs of Shakespeare having cut the text. However, some of his texts have survived in full. This is strongly asserted by Shakespeare philologists. I think one can only cut a playtext provided the viewer who reads the text at home before the performance

does not have the feeling that something was left out.

MM: It is well-known that you worked as a dramaturg at the Madách Theatre. What are the main responsibilities of a dramaturg?

DM: Nobody knows what a dramaturg's job is unless you have been brought up in the theatre. I didn't know it myself before I actually started it. If the dialogues in a play do not speak fluently, the director will have them revised by the dramaturg. In a sense, this is a translator's job – albeit anonymous –, and I cannot even count how many bad translations I rewrote as part of my job. Another task was to make peace between directors and budding playwrights when it came to arguing over the staging of a new play. I often had to persuade directors not to interfere with the text. This happened, for example, when we were staging *Széchenyi* by László Németh. This is probably Németh's most powerful playtext. His language is very condensed, intellectual, the phrases are often complicated, but as I argued to the director, the language, which is far from everyday language, can indeed be clarified with voice coaching. In the end, the performance was banned after the ninth night, for political reasons. This happened after the suppressed revolution of 1956.

MM: What languages do you translate from?

DM: From English, German, French, Italian (I translated Goldoni, for example), Greek (*Antigone*). I did Greek at secondary school, and I continued my studies of Greek later on, because I attended a Calvinist theology course, where we read the New Testament in Greek, and the Old Testament in Hebrew. I can still recite the Ten Commandments in Hebrew.

MM: If one goes through the list of your translations and adaptations, one notices a very wide selection of texts, ranging from *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie through Merimée, Nestroy and Tom Stoppard to Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. You contributed to the musical version of Mikszáth's novel *A Noszty fiú esete Tóth Marival* [The Case of the Noszty Boy with Mari Tóth], and you also revised *Cyrano*. All in all, it is not only the retranslation of classics and the exclusivity of high culture that characterises your profile. Is there a very interesting memory connected to your work as a translator and rewriter that you would like to share with us?

DM: Yes, Verdi's *Otello*. The conductor, composer and opera translator Tamás Blum was commissioned to retranslate the libretto. Since he liked my translation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, he asked me to co-translate the libretto with him. I don't play the piano, and I had forgotten how to read music, so I only had my sense of rhythm to offer. I still didn't speak Italian at that time. 'That's all right', Blum said, 'I speak Italian but I don't speak Hungarian well enough.' So the process of translation happened like this. I went to his place, where he was playing the piano and singing the text that he translated but wasn't satisfied with. I immediately corrected and reworded it on the spot. I think this translation is still in use. There are significant differences between Shakespeare's play and Verdi's opera. Iago's role is a more philosophical one in Verdi than it is in the play.

MM: I would also like to ask you about your volume entitled *Sirály a Burgban* [A Seagull in the Burg]. What inspired you to start translating the poems of Elisabeth of Wittelsbach, or, should I use her endearing nickname, Sissi?

DM: I have witnessed a great deal of injustice in this area. I am convinced that her poems are good. I have spoken very good German since my childhood, so I can tell how artistically valuable a German poem is. I translated about forty of her poems into Hungarian in order to prove that they are very good indeed. At that time not a single woman wrote sincere poems in the German-speaking world. Small wonder she left instructions that her poems were not to be published for sixty years after her death. That way, she didn't have to worry about what the king next door, or, for that matter, her royal husband would say about them...

This is a revised translation of the interview that appeared in the Hungarian literary magazine *Lyukasóra* (2003 August).